LIBRARY
Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.
No. Case, Division
No. Shelf. Section
No. Book. No.
The John M. Krebs Donation.

SCC
10,635
v.1 21

THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN OWEN, D.D.

EDITED

BY THOMAS RUSSELL, M.A.

WITH

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM ORME.

VOL. XXI.

CONTAINING

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING LOVE, CHURCH-PEACE, AND UNITY; A SURVEY OF A DISCOURSE CONCERNING ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY; TRACTS, AND ORATIONES SEX OXONII HABITÆ.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD BAYNES, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW:

And sold by J. Parker, Oxford; Deighton and Sons, Cambridge; D. Brown, Waugh and Innes, and H. S. Baynes and Co. Edinburgh; Chalmers and Collins, and M. Ogle, Glasgow; M. Keene, and R. M. Tims, Dublin.

1826.

CONTENTS

TO

THE TWENTY-FIRST VOLUME.

Page

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING EVANGELICAL LOVE, CHURCH-PEACE AND UNITY.

CHAP. I.

Complaints of want of love and unity among Christians, how to be managed, and whence fruitless. Charge of guilt on some, why now removed, and for whose sakes. Personal miscarriages of any not excused. Those who manage the charge mentioned not agreed 3

CHAP. II.

Commendations of love and unity. Their proper objects, with their general rules and measures. Of love toward all mankind in general. Allows not salvation unto any without faith in Christ Jesus. Of the differences in religion as to outward worship 14

CHAP. III.

Nature of the catholic church. The first and principal object of Christian love. Differences among the members of this church, of what nature, and how to be managed. Of the church catholic as visibly professing. The extent of it, or who belongs unto it. Of union and love in the church-state of the church of England with respect hereunto. Of particular churches: their institution: corruption of that institution. Of churches diocesan, &c. Of separation from corrupt particular churches. The just causes thereof, &c. 25

CHAP. IV.

Want of love and unity among Christians justly complained of. Causes of divisions and schisms. 1. Misapprehensions of evangelical unity. Wherein it doth truly consist. The ways and means whereby it may be obtained and preserved. Mistakes about both. 2. Neglect in churches to attend unto known gospel duty. Of preaching unto conversion and edification. Care of those that are really godly. Of discipline: how neglected, how corrupted. Principles seducing churches and their rulers into miscarriages. 1. Confidence of their place. 2. Contempt of the people. 3. Trust unto worldly grandeur. Other causes of divisions. Remainders of corruption from the general apostacy. Meekness and ignorance. Of readiness to take offences. Remedies hereof. Pride. False teachers 59

CHAP. V.

Grounds and reasons of nonconformity 104

Page

A SURVEY OF A DISCOURSE CONCERNING ECCESIASTICAL POLITY.

Review of the preface 163
A survey of the first chapter 205
A survey of the second chapter 254
A survey of the third chapter 290
A survey of the fourth chapter 306
A survey of the fifth chapter 308
A survey of the sixth chapter 318

INDULGENCE AND TOLERATION CONSIDERED: IN A LETTER UNTO A PERSON OF HONOUR 373

A PEACE-OFFERING, IN AN APOLOGY AND HUMBLE PLEA FOR INDULGENCE AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE 403

A WORD OF ADVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF LONDON 445

THE STATE OF THE KINGDOM, WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESENT BILL AGAINST CONVENTICLES 457

AN ACCOUNT OF THE GROUNDS AND REASONS ON WHICH PROTESTANT DISSENTERS DESIRE THEIR LIBERTY 467

THE CASE OF PRESENT DISTRESSES ON NONCONFORMISTS EXAMINED 473

A LETTER CONCERNING THE MATTER OF THE PRESENT EXCOMMUNICATIONS 481

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH CENSURES 499

AN ANSWER UNTO TWO QUESTIONS: WITH TWELVE ARGUMENTS AGAINST ANY CONFORMITY TO WORSHIP NOT OF DIVINE INSTITUTION 519

OF MARRYING AFTER DIVORCE, IN CASE OF ADULTERY 537

OF INFANT BAPTISM, AND DIPPING

Of infant baptism 549
A vindication of two passages in Irenæus against the exceptions of Mr. Tombs 553
Of dipping 556

REFLECTIONS ON A SLANDEROUS LIBEL AGAINST DOCTOR OWEN, IN A LETTER TO SIR THOMAS OVERBURY 561

ORATIONES SEX OXONII HABITÆ.

I. 577
II. 581
III. 590
IV. 599
V. 609
VI. 616

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

EVANGELICAL LOVE,
CHURCH-PEACE AND UNITY.

WITH THE

OCCASIONS AND REASONS OF THE PRESENT DIFFERENCES AND DIVISIONS ABOUT THINGS SACRED AND RELIGIOUS.

Speciosum quidem nomen est pacis, et pulchra opinio unitatis: sed quis ambigat eam solum unicam ecclesiæ pacem esse quæ Christi est?—HILAR.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

CHRISTIAN LOVE AND PEACE.

CHAP. I.

Complaints of want of love and unity among Christians, how to be managed, and whence fruitless. Charge of guilt on some, why now removed, and for whose sakes. Personal miscarriages of any not excused. Those who manage the charge mentioned not agreed.

THE great differences that are in the world amongst professors of the gospel about things relating to the worship of God, do exercise more or less the minds of the generality of men of all sorts: for either in themselves, or their consequences, they are looked on to be of great importance. Some herein regard principally that disadvantageous influence which they are supposed to have into men's spiritual and eternal concernments; others, that aspect which they fancy them to have upon the public peace and tranquillity of this world. Hence in all ages such divisions have caused 'great thoughts of heart;'[a] especially because it is very difficult to make a right judgment either of their nature, or their tendency. But generally by all they are looked on as evil: by some, for what they are in themselves; by others, from the disadvantage which they bring (as they suppose) unto their secular interests. Hence there are amongst many great complaints of them, and of that want of love which is looked on as their cause. And indeed it seems not only to be in the liberty, but to be the duty of every man soberly to complain of the evils which he would, but cannot remedy. For such complaints testifying a sense of their evil, and a desire of their cure, can be no more than what love unto the public good requireth of us. And if in any case this

[a] Judges v. 15.

may be allowed, it must be so in that of divisions about sacred things, or the worship of God, with their causes and manner of management amongst men. For it will be granted that the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the progress of the gospel, with the edification and peace of the church, are deeply concerned in them, and highly prejudiced by them. And in these things all men have, if not an equal, yet such a special interest, as none can forbid them the due consideration of. No man therefore ought to be judged as though he did transgress his rule, or go beyond his line, who soberly expresseth his sense of their evil, and of the calamities wherewith they are attended. Yet must it not be denied, but that much prudence and moderation is required unto the due management of such complaints. For those which either consist in, or are accompanied with, invectives against the persons or ways of others, instead of a rational discourse of the causes of such divisions, and their remedies, do not only open, inflame, and irritate former wounds, but prove matters of new contention and strife, to their great increase. Besides, in the manifold divisions and differences of this nature amongst us, all men are supposed to be under an adherence unto some one party or other. Herein every man stands at the same distance from others as they do from him. Now all complaints of this kind carry along with them a tacit justification of those by whom they are made. For no man can be so profligate as to judge himself, and the way of religious worship wherein he is engaged, to be the cause of blameable divisions amongst Christians, and yet continue therein : reflections therefore of guilt upon others, they are usually replenished withal. But if those are not attended with evident light and unavoidable conviction, because they proceed from persons, supposed not indifferent, yea, culpable in this very matter more or less themselves, by them whom they reflect upon, they are generally turned into occasions of new exasperations and contests. And hence it is come to pass, that although all good men do on all occasions bewail the want of love, forbearance, and condescension that is found among professors of the gospel, and the divisions which follow thereon, yet no comfortable nor advantageous effects do thence ensue. Yea, not only is all expectation of that blessed fruit, which a general serious

consent unto such complaints might produce, as yet utterly frustrated; but the small remainders of love and peace amongst us are hazarded and impaired, by mutual charges of the want and loss of them, on the principles and practices of each other. We have therefore need of no small watchfulness and care, lest in this matter it fall out with us, as it did with the Israelites of old,[b] in another occasion. For when they had by a sinful sedition cast out David from amongst them, and from reigning over them, after a little while seeing their folly and iniquity, they assembled together with one consent to bring him home again. But in the very beginning of their endeavours to this purpose, falling into a dispute about which of the tribes had the greatest interest in him, they not only desisted from their first design, but fell into another distemper of no less dangerous importance than what they were newly delivered from. It must be acknowledged that there hath been a sinful decay of love among professors of the gospel in this nation, if not a violent casting of it out, by such prejudices and corrupt affections, as therewith it is wholly inconsistent. And it would be a matter of no small lamentation, if upon the blooming of a design for its recovery and reduction, with all its train of forbearance, condescension, gentleness, and peace, if any such design there be, by contests about the occasions and causes of its absence, with too much fierceness in our own vindication, and pleas of a special interest in it above others, new distempers should be raised, hazarding its everlasting exclusion.

In this state of things we have hitherto contented ourselves with the testimony of our own hearts unto the sincerity of our desires, as to walk in love and peace with all men, so to exercise the fruits of them on all occasions administered unto us. And as this alone we have thus far opposed unto all those censures and reproaches which we have undergone to the contrary; so therewithal have we supported ourselves under other things, which we have also suffered. Farther to declare our thoughts and principles in and about the worship of God, than they are evidenced and testified unto, by our practice, we have hitherto forborne; lest the most moderate claims of an especial interest in the

[b] 2 Sam. xix. 41—43.

common faith and love of Christians, should occasion new contests and troubles unto ourselves and others. And we have observed, that sometimes an over-hasty endeavour to extinguish flames of this nature, hath but increased and diffused them; when perhaps if left alone, their fuel would have failed, and themselves expired. Besides, a peaceable practice, especially if accompanied with a quiet bearing of injuries, gives a greater conviction to unprejudiced minds, of peaceable principles and inclinations, than any verbal declaration, whose sincerity is continually obnoxious to the blast of evil surmises. In a resolution therefore to the same purpose we had still continued, had we not so openly and frequently been called on, either to vindicate our innocency, or to confess and acknowledge our evil. One of these we hope is the aim and tendency of all those charges or accusations, for want of love, peaceableness, and due compliance with others, of being the authors and fomentors of schisms and divisions, that have been published against us, on the account of our dissent from some constitutions of the church of England. For we do not think that any good men can please themselves in merely accusing their brethren, whereby they add to the weight of their present troubles, and evidently expose them unto more. For every charge of guilt on those who are already under sufferings, gives new encouragement and fierceness to the minds of them from whom they suffer. And as no greater encouragement can be given unto men to proceed in any way wherein they are engaged, than by their justification in what they have already done; so the only justification of those who have stirred up persecution against others, consists in charging guilt on them that are persecuted. As therefore we shall readily acknowledge any evil in our persons, principles, or ways, which we are or may be convinced of; so the sober vindication of truth and innocency, that none of the ways of God be evil spoken of by reason of us, is a duty, in the care whereof we are no less concerned. Yea, did we design and directly endeavour our own justification, we should do no more than the prime dictates of the law of nature, and the example of some of the best of men, will give us a sufficient warrant for. Besides, the clearing of private persons, especially if they are many, from undue charges and false accu-

sations, belongs unto public good ; that those who have the administration of it committed unto them, may not be misled to make a wrong judgment concerning what they have to do; as David was in the case of Mephibosheth[c] upon the false suggestions of Ziba. Neither could we be justly blamed should we be more than ordinarily urgent herein ; considering how prone the ears of men are to receive calumnious accusations concerning such as from whom they expect neither profit nor advantage ; and how slow in giving admittance to an address of the most modest defensative. But this is the least part of our present design. Our only aim is to declare those principles concerning mutual love and unity among Christians, and practices in the worship of God, wherein our own consciences do find rest and peace, and others have so much misjudged us about. This therefore we shall briefly do ; and that without such reflections or recriminations, as may any way exasperate the spirits of others, or in the least impede that reintroduction of love and concord, which it is the duty of us all to labour in. Wherefore we shall herein have no regard unto the revilings, reproaches, and threatenings of them, who seem to have had no regard to truth, or modesty, or sobriety, indeed to God or man, in the management of them. With such it is our duty not to strive, but to commit our cause to him that judgeth righteously, especially with respect unto those impure outrages which go before unto judgment. Furious persons, animated by their secular interests, or desire of revenge, unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel, and the true nature of the religion revealed by Jesus Christ, incompassionate towards the infirmities of the minds of men, whereof yet none in the world give greater instances than themselves, who have no thoughts but to trample under foot and destroy all that differ from them, we shall rather pity and pray for, than either contend withal, or hope to convince. Such they are, as if outward prevalency were added to their principles and desires, they would render all Christians like the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who came out to fight against Judah.[d] The two greater parties, upon some difference or distaste, conspire at first to destroy the inhabitants of Seir ; not doubting but that when they had de-

[c] 2 Sam. xvi. 4. [d] 2 Chron. xx. 23.

spatched them out of the way, they should accord well enough among themselves; but the event deceived their expectation; their rage ceased not until issued in the mutual destruction of them all. No otherwise would it be with those who want nothing but force or opportunity to exterminate their next dissenters in matters of religion. For when they had accomplished that design, the same principle and rage would arm them to the wasting of the residue of Christians, or their own. For a conceit of the lawfulness hereof, is raised from a desire of enlarging power and dominion, which is boundless. Especially is it so, where an empire over the reason, faith, and consciences of men is affected; which first produced the fatal engine of papal infallibility; that nothing also could have strained the wit of men to invent, and nothing less can support. Unto such as these we shall not so much as tender satisfaction, until they are capable of receiving the advice of the apostle, Eph. iv. 31. 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.' For until this be done, men are to be esteemed but as 'raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame,' whom it is to no purpose to seek to pacify, much less to contend withal.

It is for the sake of them alone who really value and esteem love, peace, and unity among Christians for themselves, that we here tender an account of our thoughts and principles concerning them. For even of them there are some who unduly charge us with owning of principles, destructive unto Christian love and condescension, and suited to perpetuate the schisms and divisions that are amongst us. Whether this hath been occasioned by an over-valuation of their own apprehensions, conceiting that their judgments ought to give rule and measure to other men's; or whether they have been, it may be insensibly unto themselves, biassed by provocations as they suppose unjustly given them, we are not out of hopes but that they may be convinced of their mistakes. Upon their indications we have searched our consciences, principles, and practices, to find whether there be any such way of perverseness in them, as we are charged withal; and may with confidence say, that we have a discharge from thence, where we are principally

concerned. Having, therefore, satisfied that duty which on this occasion was in the first place incumbent on us, we shall now for their satisfaction and our own vindication with all impartial men, declare what are our thoughts and judgments, what are our principles, ways, and practices in and about the great concerns of Christian love, unity, and peace; referring the final decision of all differences unto him who 'hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained.'

This being our present design, none may expect that we should attempt to justify or excuse any of those miscarriages or failings that are charged on some or all of those professors of the gospel, who at this day come not up unto full communion with the church of England. For we know that 'no man liveth and sinneth not;' yea, that 'in many things we all offend.' We all know but in part and are liable to manifold temptations, even all such as are common unto men. Those only we have no esteem of, who through the fever of pride have lost the understanding of their own weak, frail, and sinful condition. And we do acknowledge that there are amongst us, 'sins against the Lord our God,' for which he might not only give us up unto the reproaches and wrath of men in this world, but himself also cast us off utterly and for ever. We shall not, therefore, in the least complain of those who have most industriously represented unto the public view of the world, the weakness and miscarriages that have fallen out amongst some or more of them whose cause we plead, and discovered those corrupt affections, from whence, helped on with variety of temptations, they might probably proceed: nor shall we use any reflections on them who have severely, and we fear maliciously, laid to their charge things which they know not; as hoping that by the former the guilty may learn what to amend, now they are taught with such thorns and briers as are the scorns and reproaches of the world; and by the latter the innocent may know what to avoid. Such charges and accusations, therefore, we shall wholly pass over, with our hearty prayers that the same or worse evils may never be found amongst them by whom they are accused. Much less shall we concern ourselves in those reflections on them, which are raised from the words, expressions, or actions of particular persons, as

they have been reported and tossed up and down in the lips of talkers. The debate of such things tends only to mutual exasperations and endless strife. It may be also that for the most part they are false, or misreported invidiously, or misapplied; and true or false have been sufficiently avenged by severe retortions. And in such altercations few men understand the sharpness of their own words. Their edge is towards them whom they oppose: but when a return of the like expressions is made unto themselves, they are sensible how they pierce. So are provocations heightened, and the first intendment of reducing love ends in mutual defamatory contentions. All things, therefore, of this nature we shall pass over, and help to bury by our silence.

The principal charge against us, and that whereinto all other are resolved, is our nonconformity unto the present constitutions of the church of England. For hence we are accused to be guilty of the want of Christian love and peaceableness, of schism, and an inclination to all sorts of divisions, contrary to the rules and precepts of the gospel. Now we think it not unreasonable to desire, that those who pass such censures on us would attend unto the common known rule, whereby alone a right judgment in these cases may be made. For it is not equal that we should be concluded by other men's particular measures, as though by them we were to be regulated in the exercise of love and observance of peace. And as we doubt not but that they fix those measures unto themselves in sincerity, according unto their own light and apprehension of things; so we are sure it will be no impeachment of their wisdom or holiness, to judge that others who differ from them, do with an equal integrity, endeavour the direction and determination of their consciences in what they believe and practise. Yea, if they have not pregnant evidence to the contrary, it is their duty so to judge. A defect hereof is the spring of all that want of love, whereof so great a complaint is made. And rationally they are to be thought most sincere and scrupulous herein, who take up with determinations that are greatly to their outward disadvantage. For unless it be from a conviction of present duty with respect unto God, and their own eternal good, men are not easily induced to close with a judgment about sacred things and religious worship, which will not only cer-

tainly prejudice them, but endanger their ruin in things temporal. It is ordinarily outward secular advantages, wherewith the minds of men are generally too much affected, that give an easy admission unto persuasions and practices in religion. By these are men turned and changed every day from what before they professed when we hear of no turnings unto a suffering profession, but what arise from strong and unavoidable convictions. Moreover, should we endeavour to accommodate ourselves to the lines of other men, it may make some change of the persons with whom we have to do, but would not in the least relieve us against the charges of guilt of schism and want of love which we suffer under. Some would prescribe this measure unto us, that we should occasionally join with parish assemblies, as now stated in all their worship and sacred administrations, but will not require of us that we should absolutely forbear all other ways and means of our own edification. Will this measure satisfy all amongst us? will it free us from the imputation we suffer under? shall we not be said any more to want Christian love, to be factious or guilty of schism? It is known unto all how little it will conduce unto these ends, and how little the most will grant that church-peace is preserved thereby. Yea, the difficulty will be increased upon us beyond what an ordinary ability can solve, though we doubt not but that it may be done. For if we can do so much, we may expect justly to be pressed severely to answer why we do no more. For others say immediately, that our attendance on the public worship must be constant, with a forbearance of all other ways of religious worship beyond that of a family; yet this they would have us so to do, as in the mean time studiously to endeavour the reformation of what is judged amiss in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church. This is the measure which is prescribed unto us by some, and we know not how many censures are passed upon us for a nonconformity thereunto. Will therefore a compliance unto this length better our condition? will it deliver us from the severest reflections of being persons unpeaceable and intolerable? shall we live in a perpetual dissimulation of our judgments as to what needeth reformation? will that answer our duty? or give us peace in our latter end? shall we profess the persuasions of our minds in these things, and endeavour

by all lawful means to accomplish what we desire? shall we then escape the severest censures, as of persons inclined to schisms and divisions? Yea, many great and wise men of the church of England do look on this as the most pernicious principle and practice that any can betake themselves unto. And in reporting the memorials of former times,[e] some of them have charged all the calamities and miseries that have befallen their church to have proceeded from men of this principle, endeavouring reformation according unto models of their own, without separation.

And could we conscientiously betake ourselves to the pursuit of the same design, we should not, especially under present jealousies and exasperations, escape the same condemnation that others before us have undergone. And so it is fallen out with some, which might teach them that their measures are not authentic; and they might learn moderation towards them who cannot come up unto them, by the severity they meet withal, from those that do outgo them. Shall we, therefore, which alone seems to remain, proceed yet farther, and making a renunciation of all those principles concerning the constitution, rule, and discipline of the church, with the ways and manner of the worship of God to be observed in the assemblies of it, which we have hitherto professed, come over unto a full conformity unto the present constitutions of the church of England, and all the proceedings of its rulers thereon? Yea this is that, say some, which is required of you, and that which would put an end unto all our differences and divisions. We know, indeed, that an agreement in any thing or way, right or wrong, true or false, will promise so to do, and appear so to do, for a season; but it is truth alone that will make such agreements durable or useful. And we are not engaged in an inquiry merely after peace, but after peace with truth. Yea, to lay aside the consideration of truth, in a disquisition after peace and agreement in and about spiritual things, is to exclude a regard unto God and his authority, and to provide only for ourselves. And what it is which at present lays a prohibition on our consciences against the compliance proposed shall be afterward declared; neither will we here insist upon the discouragements that are given us from the present state of the

[e] Heyl. Hist. of Presb.

church itself, which yet are not a few. Only we must say, that there doth not appear unto us in many that steadiness in the profession of the truth owned amongst us upon and since the reformation, nor that consent upon the grounds and reasons of the government and discipline in it that we are required to submit unto, which were necessary to invite any dissenters to a thorough conformity unto it. That there are daily inroads made upon the ancient doctrine of this church, and that without the least control from them who pretend to be the sole conservators of it, until, if not the whole, yet the principal parts of it are laid waste, is sufficiently evident and may be easily proved. And we fear not to own, that we cannot conform to Arminianism, Socinianism, on the one hand, or popery on the other, with what new or specious pretences soever they may be blended. And for the ecclesiastical government, as in the hands of our mere ecclesisastical persons, when it is agreed among themselves, whether it be from heaven or of men, we shall know the better how to judge of it. But suppose we should wave all such considerations, and come up to a full conformity unto all that is, or shall, or may be required of us; will this give us a universally pleadable acquitment from the charges of the guilt of want of love, schism, and divisions? We should indeed possibly be delivered from the noise and clamour of a few, crying out sectaries, fanatics, schismatics, church-dividers; but withal should continue under the censures of the great, and at present thriving church of Rome, for the same supposed crimes. And sure enough we are, that a compliance with them who have been the real causes and occasions of all the schisms and divisions that are amongst Christians almost in the whole world, would yield us no solid relief in the change of our condition. Yet without this no men can free themselves from the loudest outcries against them on the account of schism. And this sufficiently manifests how little indeed they are to be valued, seeing for the most part they are nothing but the steam of interest and party. It is therefore apparent, that the accommodations of our judgments and practices to the measures of other men, will afford us no real advantage as to the imputations we suffer under; nor will give satisfaction unto all professors of Christianity that we pursue love and peace in a due manner: for what one sort

requireth of us, another will instantly disallow and condemn. And it is well if the judgment of the major part of all sorts be not influenced by custom, prejudices, and secular advantages. We have therefore no way left, but that which indeed ought to be the only way of Christians in these things, namely, to seek in sincerity the satisfaction of our own consciences, and the approving of our hearts unto the searcher of them, in a diligent attendance unto our own especial duty, according to that rule which will neither deceive us nor fail us. And an account of what we do herein we shall now tender unto them that follow truth with peace.

CHAP. II.

Commendations of love and unity. Their proper objects, with their general rules and measures. Of love toward all mankind in general. Allows not salvation unto any without faith in Christ Jesus. Of the differences in religion as to outward worship.

THE foundation of our discourse might be laid in the commendation of Christian love and unity; and thereon we might easily enlarge, as also abound in a collection of testimonies confirming our assertions. But the old reply in such a case, by whom ever were they discommended, evidenceth a labour therein to be needless and superfluous. We shall therefore only say, that they are greatly mistaken, who from the condition whereunto at present we are driven and necessitated, do suppose that we value not these things at as high a rate as themselves, or any other professors of Christian religion in the world. A greater noise about them may be made possibly by such as have accommodated their name and notion to their own interests, and who point their pleas about them, and their pretences of them, to their own secular advantage; but as for a real valuation of the things themselves, as they are required of us, and prescribed unto us in the gospel, we shall not willingly be found to come behind any that own the name of Christ in the world. We know that God hath styled himself, the God of love, peace, and order, in the church, because they are eminently from him, and highly accepted with him. And as love is the new commandment which

Jesus Christ hath given unto his disciples, so he hath appointed it to be the bond of perfection unto them; which nothing else will ever be, however finely invented for them, or forcibly imposed on them. Without this love, in what relates to church communion, whatever else we are, we are but as 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.' And all unity or agreement in outward order not proceeding from and animated by this love, are things wherein neither Christ nor the gospel are much concerned. An endeavour also after one mind and one judgment[a] amongst all believers, for a help unto us, to keep the 'unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,' we acknowledge to be indispensably required of us. And therefore where any opinion or practice in or about religion or the worship of God, do apparently in themselves impair the gracious holy principles of love and peace, or obstruct men in the exercise of any duties which those principles require or lead unto, it is a great and weighty prejudice against their truth and acceptation with God. As, therefore, we shall not boast of the prevalency of these principles in our minds; seeing, that though we should know nothing to the contrary by ourselves, yet are we not therefore justified; so we are assured that none can justly condemn us for the want of them, unless they can make good their charge by instances not relating to the peculiar differences between them and us. For what doth so will neither warrant any to make such a judgment, nor carry any conviction in it towards them that are judged. Upon the whole matter, we shall not easily be diverted from pursuing our claim unto an equal interest in these things with any other professors of the Christian religion; although at present we do it not by enlarged commendations of them. Much less are we in the least moved or shaken in our minds from the accusations of them, who having the advantage of force and power, do make a compliance with themselves, in all their impositions and self-interested conceptions, the sole measure of other men's exercise and actings of these principles. We have a much safer rule whereby to make a judgment of them, whereunto we know we 'shall do well to attend, as unto a light shining in a dark place.' But now whereas all these things, namely, love, peace, and unity, are equally dear unto us; yet there are

[a] Phil. ii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 10.

different rules prescribed for the exercise and pursuit of them. Our love is to be catholic, unconfined as the beams of the sun, or as the showers of rain that fall on the whole earth. Nothing of God's rational creation in this world is to be exempted from being the object thereof. And where only any exception might seem to be warranted by some men's causeless hatred, with unjust and unreasonable persecution of us, there the exercise of it is given us in especial and strictest charge, which is one of the noble singularities of Christian religion. But whereas men are cast into various conditions on account of their relation unto God, the actual exercise of love towards them is required of us in a suitable variety. For it is God himself, in his infinite excellencies, who is the first and adequate object of our love, which descends unto others according to their participations from him, and the especial relations created by his appointment; whereof we shall speak afterward. Our duty in the observance of peace is, as unto its object, equally extended. And the rule or measure given us herein is the utmost of our endeavours in all ways of truth and righteousness which are required, or may have a tendency thereunto. For as we are commanded to 'follow peace with all men'[b] under the same indispensable necessity as to obtain and observe holiness in our own persons, 'without which none shall see God;' so as to the measure of our endeavours unto this end, we are directed, 'if it be possible, and as far as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men.'[c] The rule for unity, as it is supposed to comprise all church-communion, falls under many restrictions. For herein the especial commands of Christ, and institutions of the gospel committed unto our care and observance falling under consideration, our practice is precisely limited unto those commands, and by the nature of those institutions.

These being the things we are to attend unto, and these being their general rules and measures, we shall with respect unto the present state of religious affairs in the world, amongst those who make profession of the Christian religion, plainly declare what are our thoughts and judgments, what we conceive to be our duty, and what is our practice, submitting them unto the present apprehensions of unprejudiced

[b] Heb. xii. 14. [c] Rom. xi. 18.

persons, leaving the final sentence and determination of our cause to the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

Love toward all mankind in general we acknowledge to be required of us; and we are debtors in the fruits of it to the whole creation of God. For he hath not only implanted the principles of it in that nature whereof we are in common partakers with the whole race and kind, whereunto all hatred and its effects were originally foreign and introduced by the devil; nor only given us his command for it, enlarging on its grounds and reasons in the gospel; but in his design of recovering us out of our lapsed condition unto a conformity with himself, proposeth in an especial manner the example of his own love and goodness, which are extended unto all, for our imitation; Mat. v. 44, 45. His philanthropy and communicative love, from his own infinite self-fulness, wherewith all creatures in all places, times, and seasons, are filled and satisfied, as from an immeasurable ocean of goodness, are proposed unto us to direct the exercise of that drop from the divine nature, wherewith we are intrusted. 'Love your enemies,' saith our Saviour, 'bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.' Now all mankind may be cast into two ranks or orders. For, first, there are those who are yet 'without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;'[d] such we mean as are either negatively or privatively infidels, or unbelievers; who have yet never heard the sound of the gospel, or do continue to refuse and reject it where it is proposed and tendered unto them. And there are those, secondly, who have in one way or other received the doctrine of the gospel, and do make profession thereof in the world. To both these sorts we do acknowledge that we owe the duty of love. Even towards the infidel, pagan, and Mahometan world, Jews and Gentiles, we are debtors in this duty; and we desire to be humbled for it as our sin, wherein we are wanting in the discharge of it, or wherein the

[d] Eph. ii. 12.

fruits of it do not abound in us to the praise of God. Now love, in the first notion of it, is the willing of a wanted good unto the object of it, or those that are loved, producing an endeavour to effect it, unto the utmost of the ability of them in whom it is. Where this absent good is of great importance, the first natural and genuine effect of love is compassion. This good, as unto all unbelievers, is whatever should deliver them from present or eternal misery; whatever should lead, guide, or bring them unto blessedness in the enjoyment of God. Besides, the absence hereof is accompanied, even in this world, with all that blindness and darkness of mind, all that slavery unto sin and the devil, that can any way concur to make a rational being truly miserable. If we have not hearts like the flint or adamant, we cannot but be moved with compassion towards so many perishing souls, originally made like ourselves in the image of God, and from whom that we differ in any thing, is an effect of mere sovereign grace, and not the fruit of our own contrivance, nor the reward of our worth or merit. And those who are altogether unconcerned in others, are not much concerned in themselves; for the true love of ourselves is the rule of our love unto other men. Again, compassion proceeding from love will work by prayer for relief: for it is God alone who can supply their wants; and our only way of treating with him about it is by our humble supplications. And if herein also we should be found wanting, we should more judge ourselves to be defective in true Christian love and charity, than we can for many of those mistakes which are charged on us in other things, were we convinced that such they are, which as yet we are not. It is therefore our continual prayer, that God would send out his light and his truth unto the utmost parts of the earth, to visit by them those dark places which are yet filled with habitations of cruelty; that he would remove the veil of covering which is yet on the face of many great and populous nations, that 'the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;' even that according to his promise, 'he would turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' And this we desire to be found doing, not in a formal or customary manner, but out of a sincere

compassion for the souls of men, a deep sense of the interest herein of the glory of God, and a desire after the accomplishment of those prophecies and promises in the Scripture, which speak comfortably towards an expectation of abundant grace to be manifested unto the residue of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, in the latter days. Moreover, unto compassion and supplications, love requireth that we should add also all other possible endeavours for their relief. Herein consists that work and labour of love which are so much recommended unto us. But the actings of love in these most useful ways are, for the most part, obstructed unto us by the want of opportunities, which under the guidance of divine providence are the rule of our call unto the duties wherein such endeavours consist, and whereby they may be expressed. Only this at present we have to rejoice in, that through the unwearied labours of some holy and worthy persons, sundry churches of Indians are lately called and gathered in America, wherein the natives of those parts of the world, who for so many generations sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, do, under the guidance of pastors and elders of their own, walk in the fellowship of the gospel, giving glory to God by Jesus Christ. And let it not seem impertinent that we have given this account of our judgments concerning that love which we do and ought to bear unto all, even the worst of men; seeing those by whom our testimony is received, will not, nay cannot, easily suppose that we would wilfully neglect the exercise of the same affections towards those, concerning whom our obligations thereunto are unspeakably greater and more excellent.

There is indeed another kind of pretended charity towards this sort of men, which we profess we have not for them, although we judge we do not want it. For there can be no want unto any of an error or mistake, wherein the charity intended doth consist. And this is the judgment of some, that they or some of them may attain salvation or eternal blessedness in the condition wherein they are, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This we acknowledge we neither believe nor hope concerning them; nor, to speak plainly, can desire it should be so, unless God had otherwise revealed himself concerning Jesus Christ and them, than yet he hath done. And we are so far from supposing that there

is in us on this account any blameable defect of charity, that we know ourselves to be freed by this persuasion from a dangerous error, which if admitted, would both weaken our own faith, and impair all the due and proper effects of charity towards others. 'For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), yet unto us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.'[e] We know 'there is no salvation in any other' but by Jesus Christ, and that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'[f] Nor is this name given any otherwise amongst men but by the gospel: for it is not the giving of the person of Christ absolutely to be a mediator, but the declaration of his name by the gospel, as the means of salvation, that is intended. Hence our Lord Jesus Christ, giving that commission to his apostles to preach it, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' he adds unto it that decretory sentence, concerning the everlasting condition of all men with respect thereunto; 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.'[g] As the preaching of the gospel, and the belief on Jesus Christ thereon, are the only means of obtaining salvation; so all those who are not made partakers of them must perish eternally. So when the apostle affirms that the Jews would have hindered them from preaching 'to the Gentiles that they might be saved,'[h] he plainly declares that without it they could not so be. Neither were any of them ever better, or in a better condition, than they are described by the same apostle, Eph. ii. 12. and in sundry other places wherein he allows them no possibility of obtaining eternal blessedness. Neither do we in this matter consider what God can do, or what he hath done, to the communicating of grace and faith in Jesus Christ unto any particular persons at any time, or in any place, in an extraordinary manner. We are not called to make a judgment thereof, nor can any rule be hence collected to regulate the exercise of our love. 'Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but revealed things to us and our children, that we may do his will.' When and where such grace and

[e] 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. [f] Acts vi. 12. [g] Mark xvi. 15. 16. [h] 1 Thess. ii. 16.

faith do manifest themselves by their effects, we ought readily to own and embrace them. But the only inquiry in this matter is, what those that are utterly destitute of the revelation of Jesus Christ, either as made originally in the promise, or as explained in the gospel, may, under the mere conduct of the light of nature, as consisting of the innate principles of reason, with their improvement, or as increased by the consideration of the effects of divine power and providence, by the strength and exercise of their own moral principles attain unto, as unto their present acceptance with God, and future eternal salvation. That they may be saved in every sect, who live exactly according to the light of nature, is a doctrine anathematized by the church of England, article 18. And the reason given hereof is, because the Scriptures propose the name of Jesus Christ alone whereby we may be saved. And if we do believe that description which is given in the Scripture of men, their moral abilities, and their works, as they lie in the common state of mankind since the entrance of sin, with respect unto God and salvation, we shall not be able to be of another mind: for they are said to be blind,[i] yea, to be darkness, to be 'dead in trespasses and sins,' no[t] 'to receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto them;' and their minds to be 'enmity against God'[k] himself. That there may be any just expectation concerning such persons, that they will 'work out their salvation with fear and trembling,' we are not convinced: neither do we think that God will accept of a more imperfect obedience in them that know not Jesus Christ, than he requires of them who do believe in him, for then should he prove a disadvantage unto them. Besides, all their best works are severely reflected on in the Scripture, and represented as unprofitable: for whereas in themselves they are compared to evil trees, thorns, and briers, we are assured they neither do, nor can bring forth good grapes or figs. Besides, in the Scripture, the whole business of salvation in the first place turns upon the hinge of faith supernatural and divine; 'for without faith it is impossible to please God;'[l] and 'he that believeth not shall be damned;' 'he that believeth not in the name of the Son of God is con-

[i] Luke iv. 18. [k] Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. ii. 1—3. iv. 18. Rom. viii. 8.
[l] Heb. xi. 6. John iii. 15. 36. Gal. v. 6.

demned already; for neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love:' and it is by faith that the just shall live. That this faith may be educed out of the obediential principles of nature, it was indeed the opinion of Pelagius of old; but it will not now, we hope, be openly asserted by any. Moreover, this faith is in the Scripture, if not limited and determined, yet directed unto Jesus Christ as its necessary peculiar object: 'For this is life eternal, that we may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.' It seems therefore that the knowledge of the only true God is not sufficient to attain eternal life, unless the knowledge of Jesus Christ also do accompany it: for 'this is the record of heaven, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;'[m] which is enough to determine the controversy. And those assertions, that 'there is no other name given amongst men whereby they may be saved;' and that 'other foundation can no man lay, save what is laid, that is, Jesus Christ;'[n] are of the same importance: and it were needless to multiply the testimonies that are given us to that purpose elsewhere. Neither can it be made to appear that the concatenation of the saving means, whereby men that are adult are brought into glory, is not absolutely universal: and amongst them there is vocation, or an effectual calling[o] to the knowledge of Christ by the gospel. Neither will the same apostle allow a saving invocation of the name of God to any but those that are brought to believe by hearing the word preached.[p] It is said that God may by ways secret and unknown to us, reveal Jesus Christ to them, and so by faith in him sanctify their natures, and endow them with his Spirit; which things, it is granted we suppose, are indispensably necessary unto salvation. Those whom God thus deals withal are not pagans, but Christians, concerning whom none ever doubted but they might be saved. It is also granted that men may learn much of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, which both require and teach many duties to be performed towards him; but withal we believe, that without the internal sanctification of

[m] 1 John v. 11, 12.
[n] Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11.
[o] Rom. viii. 29, 30.
[p] Rom. x. 13—15.

the Spirit, communicated by and with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, no man can be saved. But we intend not here to dispute about these things. Instead of an effect of love and charity, it is manifest that the opinion which grants salvation unto the heathen, or any of them, upon the due improvement of their rational faculties and moral principles, ariseth from a want of due consideration of the true nature of sin and grace, of the fall of man and his recovery, of the law and gospel, and of the wisdom and love of God in sending Jesus Christ to make atonement for sinners, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. And not only so, but it evidently prepares the way unto those noxious opinions which at this day among many infest and corrupt Christian religion, and foment those seeds of atheism which spring up so fast as to threaten the overspreading of the whole field of Christianity. For hence it will follow by an easy deduction, that every one may be saved, or attain unto his utmost happiness in his own religion, be it what it will, whilst under any notion or conception he acknowledgeth a divine Being, and his own dependence thereon. And seeing that on this supposition it must be confessed, that religion consists solely in moral honesty and a fancied internal piety of mind towards the Deity (for in nothing else can a centring of all religions in the world unto a certain end be imagined), it follows, that there is no outward profession of it indispensably necessary, but that every one may take up and make use of that which is best suited unto his interest in his present condition and circumstances. And as this being once admitted, will give the minds of men an indifferency as unto the several religions that are in the world, so it will quickly produce in them a contempt of them all. And from an entertainment of, or an indifferency of mind about, these and the like noisome opinions, it is come to pass that the gospel, after a continued triumph for sixteen hundred years over hell and the world, doth at this day in the midst of Christendom, hardly with multitudes maintain the reputation of its truth and divinity; and is by many, living in a kind of outward conformity unto the institutes of Christian religion, despised and laughed to scorn. But the proud and foolish atheistical opiniators of our days, whose sole design is to fortify themselves by the darkness of their minds against

the charges of their own conscience upon their wicked and debauched conversations, do but expose themselves to the scorn of all sober and rational persons. For what are a few obscure, and for the most part vicious renegadoes, in comparison of those great, wise, numerous, and sober persons, whom the gospel, in its first setting forth in the world by the evidence of its truth, and the efficacy of its power, subdued and conquered? Are they as learned as the renowned philosophers of those days, who, advantaged by the endeavours and fruits of all the great wits of former ages, had advanced solid rational literature to the greatest height that ever it attained in this world; or possibly ever will do so; the minds of men having now something more excellent and noble to entertain themselves withal? Are they to be equalled in wisdom and experience with those glorious emperors, senators, and princes, who then swayed the sceptres and affairs of the world? Can they produce any thing to oppose unto the gospel, that is likely to influence the minds of men, in any degree comparably to the religion of these great, learned, wise, and mighty personages, which having received by their fathers from days immemorial, was visibly attended with all earthly glories and prosperities, which were accounted as the reward of their due observance of it? And yet, whereas there was a conspiracy of all those persons, and this influenced by the craft of infernal powers, and managed with all that wisdom, subtlety, power, and cruelty, that the nature of man is capable to exercise, on purpose to oppose the gospel, and keep it from taking root in the world; yet, by the glorious evidence of its divine extract and original wherewith it is accompanied, by the efficacy and power which God gave the doctrine of it in and over the minds of men, all managed by the spiritual weapons of its preachers, 'which were mighty through God, to the pulling down of those strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God;'[y] it prevailed against them all, and subdued the world unto an acknowledgment of its truth, with the divine power and authority of its author. Certainly there is nothing more contemptible, than that the indulgence of some inconsiderable persons unto their lusts

[y] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

and vices, who are void of all those excellencies in notion and practice, which have already been triumphed over by the gospel when set up in competition with it, or opposition unto it, should be once imagined to bring it into question, or to cast any disreputation upon it. But to treat of these things is not our present design; we have only mentioned them occasionally, in the account which it was necessary we should give concerning our love to all men in general, with the grounds we proceed upon in the exercise of it.

CHAP. III.

Nature of the catholic church. The first and principal object of Christian love. Differences among the members of this church, of what nature, and how to be managed. Of the church catholic as visibly professing. The extent of it, or who belongs unto it. Of union and love in this church-state of the church of England with respect hereunto. Of particular churches: their institution: corruption of that institution. Of churches diocesan, &c. Of separation from corrupt particular churches. The just causes thereof, &c.

In the second sort of mankind before mentioned, consists the visible kingdom of Christ in this world. This being grounded in his death and resurrection, and conspicuously settled by his sending of the Holy Ghost after his ascension, he hath ever since preserved in the world, against all the contrivances of Satan, or oppositions of the gates of hell, and will do so unto the consummation of all things. 'For he must reign until all his enemies are made his footstool.' Towards these on all accounts our love ought to be intense and fervent, as that which is the immediate bond of our relation unto them, and union with them. And this kingdom or church of Christ on the earth may be, and is generally by all considered under a threefold notion. First, As therein, and among the members of it, is comprised that real living and spiritual body of his, which is firstly, peculiarly, and properly the catholic church militant in this world. These are his elect, redeemed, justified, and sanctified ones, who are savingly united unto their head, by the same quickening and sanctifying Spirit, dwell-

ing in him in all fulness, and communicated unto them by him, according to his promise. This is that catholic church which we profess to believe, which being hid from the eyes of men, and absolutely invisible in its mystical form, or spiritual saving relation unto the Lord Christ, and its unity with him, is yet more or less always visible, by that profession of faith in him, and obedience unto him, which it maketh in the world, and is always obliged so to do. 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'[a] And this church we believe to be so disposed over the whole world, that wherever there are any societies or numbers of men who ordinarily profess the gospel, and subjection to the kingly rule of Christ thereby, with a hope of eternal blessedness by his mediation; we no way doubt but that there are among them some who really belong thereunto. In and by them doth the Lord Christ continually fulfil and accomplish the promise of his presence by his Spirit with them that believe in his name; who are thereby interested in all the privileges of the gospel, and authorized unto the administration and participation of all the holy ordinances thereof. And were it not that we ought not to boast ourselves against others, especially such as have not had the spiritual advantages that the inhabitants of these nations have been intrusted withal, and who have been exposed unto more violent temptations than they, we should not fear to say, that among those of all sorts who in these nations hold the head, there is probably according unto a judgment to be made by the fruits of that Spirit which is savingly communicated unto the church in this sense alone, a greater number of persons belonging thereunto, than in any one nation or church under heaven. The charge therefore of some against us, that we paganize the nation, by reason of some different apprehensions from others, concerning the regular constitution of particular churches for the celebration of gospel worship, is wondrous vain and ungrounded. But we know that men use such severe expressions and reflections, out of a discomposed habit of mind which they have accustomed themselves unto, and not

[a] Rom. x. 10.

from a sedate judgment and consideration of the things themselves. And hence they will labour to convince others of that, whereof, if they would put it unto a serious trial, they would never be able to convince themselves.

This then is that church which on the account of their sincere faith and obedience shall be saved; and out of which, on the account of their profession, there is no salvation to be obtained; which things are weakly and arrogantly appropriated unto any particular church or churches in the world. For it is possible that men may be members of it, and yet not belong or relate unto any particular church on the earth; and so it often falleth out, as we could manifest by instances, did that work now lie before us. This is the church which the 'Lord Christ loved and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'[b] And we must acknowledge that in all things this is the church, unto which we have our first and principal regard, as being the spring from which all other considerations of the church do flow. Within the verge and compass of it do we endeavour to be found, the end of the dispensation of the gospel unto men being that they should do so. Neither would we to save our lives (which for the members of this church and their good, we are bound to lay down,[c] when justly called thereunto), wilfully live in the neglect of that love towards them or any of them, which we hope God hath planted in our hearts, and made natural unto us, by that one and selfsame Spirit, by whom the whole mystical body of Christ is animated. We do confess, that because the best of men in this life do knowbut in part, that all the members of this church are in many things liable to error, mistakes, and miscarriages: and hence it is, that although they are all internally acted and guided by the same Spirit, in all things absolutely necessary to their eternal salvation, and do all attend unto the same rule of the word, according as they apprehend the mind of God in it, and concerning it, have all for the

[b] Eph. v. 26, 27.

[c] 1 John iii. 16.

nature and substance of it, the same divine faith and love, and are all equally united unto their head; yet in the profession which they make of the conceptions and persuasions of their minds, about the things revealed in the Scripture, there are, and always have been, many differences among them. Neither is it morally possible it should be otherwise, whilst in their judgment and profession they are left unto the ability of their own minds, and liberty of their wills, under that great variety of the means of light and truth, with other circumstances, whereinto they are disposed by the holy wise providence of God. Nor hath the Lord Christ absolutely promised that it shall be otherwise with them; but securing them all by his Spirit in the foundations of eternal salvation, he leaves them in other things to the exercise of mutual love and forbearance; with a charge of duty after a continual endeavour to grow up unto a perfect union, by the improvement of the blessed aids and assistances which he is pleased to afford unto them. And those who by ways of force would drive them into any other union or agreement, than their own light and duty will lead them into, do what in them lies to oppose the whole design of the Lord Christ towards them, and his rule over them. In the mean time it is granted, that they may fall into divisions and schisms, and mutual exasperations among themselves, through the remainders of darkness in their minds, and the infirmity of the flesh. [d] And in such cases mutual judgings and despisings are apt to ensue; and that to the prejudice and great disadvantages of that common faith which they do profess. And yet notwithstanding all this (such cross entangled wheels are there in the course of our nature), they all of them really value and esteem the things wherein they agree incomparably above those wherein they differ. But their valuation of the matter of their union and agreement is purely spiritual; whereas their differences are usually influenced by carnal and secular considerations, which have for the most part a sensible impression on the minds of poor mortals. But so far as their divisions and differences are unto them unavoidable, the remedy of farther evils proceeding from them is plainly

[d] Rom. xiv. 3.

and frequently expressed in the Scripture. It is love, meekness, forbearance, bowels of compassion, with those other graces of the Spirit, wherein our conformity unto Christ doth consist, with a true understanding and the due valuation of the 'unity of faith,' and the common hope of believers, which are the ways prescribed unto us, for the prevention of those evils which, without them, our unavoidable differences will occasion. And this excellent way of the gospel, together with a rejection of evil surmises, and a watchfulness over ourselves against irregular judging and censuring of others, together with a peaceable walking in consent and unity so far as we have attained, is so fully and clearly proposed unto us therein, that they must have their eyes blinded by prejudices and carnal interests, or some effectual working of the god of this world on their minds, into whose understandings the light of it doth not shine with uncontrollable evidence and conviction. That the sons or children of this church of 'Jerusalem which is above, and is the mother of us all,' should on the account of their various apprehensions of some things relating to religion or the worship of God, unavoidably attending their frail and imperfect condition in this world, yea, or of any schisms or divisions ensuing thereon, proceeding from corrupt and not thoroughly mortified affections, be warranted to hate, judge, despise, or contemn one another, much more to strive by external force to coerce, punish, or destroy them that differ from them, is as foreign to the gospel, as that we should believe in Mahomet, and not in Jesus Christ. Whatever share, therefore, we are forced to bear in differences with, or divisions from, the members of this church (that is, any who declare and evidence themselves so to be, by a visible and regular profession of faith and obedience), as it is a continual sorrow and trouble unto us; so we acknowledge it to be our duty (and shall be willing to undergo any blame, where we are found defective in the discharge of it, unto the utmost of our power) to endeavour after the strictest communion with them in all spiritual things that the gospel doth require, or whereof our condition in this world is capable. In the mean time, until this can be attained, it is our desire to manage the profession of our own light and apprehensions, without anger, bitterness, clamours, evil

speaking, or any other thing that may be irregular in ourselves, or give just cause of offence unto others. Our prayers are also continually for the spiritual prosperity of this church, for its increase in faith and holiness, and especially for the healing of all breaches that are among them that belong thereunto throughout the world. And were we not satisfied that the principles which we own, about the right constitution of the churches of Christ, and the worship of God to be observed in them, are singularly suited to the furtherance and preservation of union and due order among all the members of this church, we should not need to be excited by any unto their renunciation. But our main design in all these things is, that both they, and we with them, may enjoy that peace which the Lord Christ hath bequeathed unto us, and walk in the way which he hath prescribed for us. And these things we mention, neither to boast of, nor yet to justify ourselves, but only to acknowledge what is our conviction concerning our duty in this matter. And might there any sedate, peaceable, unprejudicate endeavours be countenanced and encouraged, for the allaying of all occasional distempers, and the composing of all differences among them who belong to this church of Christ, so as that they might all of them (at least in these nations) not only 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' but also agree and consent in all ways and acts of religious communion; we doubt not to manifest, that no rigid adherence unto the practice of any conceptions of our own, in things wherein the gospel alloweth a condescension and forbearance, no delight in singularity, no prejudice against persons or things, should obstruct us in the promotion of it to the utmost of our power and ability. Upon the whole matter we own it as our duty to follow and seek after peace, unity, consent and agreement in holy worship, with all the members of this church, or those who by a regular profession manifest themselves so to be; and will with all readiness and alacrity renounce every principle or practice, that is either inconsistent with such communion, or directly or indirectly is in itself obstructive of it.

Secondly, The church of Christ may be considered with respect unto its outward profession, as constitutive of its being, and the formal reason of its denomination. And

this is the church catholic visible, whereunto they all universally belong, who profess the invocation of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, under the limitations that shall be mentioned afterward. And this is the visible kingdom of Christ, which on the account of its profession, and thereby, is distinguished from that world which lieth in evil, and is absolutely under the power of Satan. And so in common use the church and the world are contradistinguished. Yet on other accounts many who belong unto this church, by reason of some kind of profession that they make, may justly be esteemed to be the world, or of it. So our Lord Jesus Christ called the generality of the professing church in his time: 'The world,' saith he, 'hateth me.'[d] And that we may know that he thereby intended the church of the Jews, besides that the circumstances of the place evince it, he puts it out of question by the testimony which he produceth in the confirmation of his assertion concerning their unjust and causeless hatred; namely, 'It is written in their law, They have hated me without a cause;' which being taken out of the Psalms,[e] was part of the law, or rule of the Judaical church only. Now he thus terms them, because the generality of them, especially their rulers, although they professed to know God, and to worship him according to his word and the tradition of their fathers, yet were not only corrupt and wicked in their lives, but also persecuted him and his disciples, in whom the power and truth of God were manifested beyond what they were able to bear. And hence a general rule is established, that what profession soever any men do make of the knowledge and worship of God, to what church soever they do, or may be thought to belong, yet if they are wicked or ungodly in their lives, and persecutors of such as are better than themselves, they are really of the world, and with it will perish, without repentance. These are they, who receiving on them a form or delineation of godliness, do yet deny the power of it; from whom, we are commanded to turn away. But yet we acknowledge that there is a real difference to be made between them who in any way or manner make profession of the name of Christ with subjection

[d] John xvii. 18, 19. 25. [e] Psal. xxxv. 19.

unto him, and that infidel world by whom the gospel is totally rejected, or to whom it was never tendered.

In this catholic visible church, as comprehensive of all who throughout the world outwardly own the gospel, there is an acknowledgment of 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism,' which are a sufficient foundation of that love, union, and communion among them, which they are capable of, or are required of them. For in the joint profession of the same Lord, faith, and baptism, consists the union of the church, under this consideration, that is, as catholic and visibly professing, and in nothing else. And hereunto also is required as the principle animating that communion, and rendering it acceptable, mutual love with its occasional exercise; as a fruit of that love which we have unto Jesus Christ, who is the object of our common profession. And setting aside the consideration of them who openly rejected the principal fundamentals of Christian religion (as denying the Lord Christ to be the eternal Son of God, with the use and efficacy of his death, as also the personal subsistence and Deity of the Holy Spirit), and there is no known community of these professors in the world, but they own so much of the truths concerning 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,' as are sufficient to guide them into life and salvation. And thereon we no way doubt, but that among them all there are some really belonging to the purpose of God's election, who by the means that they do enjoy, shall at length be brought unto everlasting glory. For we do not think that God, by his providence, would maintain the dispensation of the gospel in any place, or among any people, among whom there are none whom he hath designed to bring unto the enjoyment of himself. For that is the rule of his sending and continuing of it; whereon he enjoined the apostle Paul[f] to stay in such places where he had much people whom he would have to be converted. He would not continue from generation to generation, to scatter his pearls where there were none but rending swine, nor send fishers unto waters wherein he knew there were nothing but serpents and vipers. It is true the gospel, as preached unto many, is only a testimony against them,[g] leaving them without excuse; and proves unto

[f] Acts xviii. 9—11. [g] Matt. xxiv. 14.

them 'a savour of death unto death.' But the first, direct, and principal design of the dispensation of it being the conversion of souls, and their eternal salvation, it will not probably be continued in any place, nor is so, where this design is not pursued nor accomplished towards any. Neither will God make use of it any where merely for the aggravation of men's sins and condemnation; nor would his so doing consist with the honour of the gospel itself, or the glory of that love and grace which it professeth to declare. Where it is indeed openly rejected, there that shall be the condemnation of men; but where it finds any admittance, there it hath somewhat of its genuine and proper work to effect. And the gospel is esteemed to be in all places dispensed and admitted, where the Scripture being received as the word of God, men are from the light, truth, and doctrine contained therein, by any means so far instructed, as to take upon them the profession of subjecting their souls to Jesus Christ, and of observing the religious duties by him prescribed, in opposition to all false religions in the world. Amongst all these the foundations of saving faith are at this day preserved: for they universally receive the whole canonical Scripture, and acknowledge it to be the word of God, on such motives as prevail with them to do so sincerely. Herein they give a tacit consent unto the whole truth contained in it; for they receive it as from God, without exception or limitation. And this they cannot do without a general renunciation of all the falsities and evils that it doth condemn. Where these things concur, men will not believe nor practise any thing in religion, but what they think God requires of them, and will accept from them. And we find it also in the event, that all the persons spoken of, wherever they are, do universally profess, that they believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his only and eternal Son. They all look also for salvation by him, and profess obedience unto him, believing that God raised him from the dead. They believe in like manner that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, with many other sacred truths of the same importance; as also, that 'without holiness no man shall see God.' However therefore they are differenced and divided among themselves, however they are mutually esteemed heretics and schismatics, however through

the subtlety of Satan they are excited and provoked to curse and persecute one another, with wonderful folly, and by an open contradiction unto other principles which they profess; yet are they all subjects of the visible kingdom of Christ, and belong all of them to the catholic church, making profession of the name of Christ in the world, in which there is salvation to be obtained, and out of which there is none.

We take not any consideration at present of that absurd, foolish, and uncharitable error, which would confine the catholic church of Christ unto a particular church of one single denomination; or indeed rather unto a combination of some persons, in an outward mode of religious rule and worship; whereof the Scripture is as silent, as of things that never were, nor ever shall be. Yea, we look upon it as intolerable presumption, and the utmost height of uncharitableness, for any to judge, that the constant profession of the name of Christ, made by multitudes of Christians, with the lasting miseries and frequent martyrdoms which for his sake they undergo, should turn unto no advantage either of the glory of God, or their own eternal blessedness, because in some things they differ from them. Yet such is the judgment of those of the church of Rome; and so are they bound to judge by the fundamental principles and laws of their church-communion. But men ought to fear lest they should 'meet with judgment without mercy, who have shewed no mercy.'[h] Had we ever entertained a thought uncharitable to such a prodigy of insolence, had we ever excluded any sort of Christians absolutely from an interest in the love of God or grace of Jesus Christ, or hopes of salvation, because they do not, or will not, comply with those ways and terms of outward church-communion which we approve of, we should judge ourselves as highly criminal in want of Christian love, as any can desire to have us esteemed so to be.

It is then the universal collective body of them that profess the gospel throughout the world which we own as the catholic church of Christ. How far the errors in judgment, or miscarriages in sacred worship, which any of them have superadded unto the foundations of truth which they do profess, may be of so pernicious a nature as to hinder them

[h] James ii. 13.

from an interest in the covenant of God, and so prejudice their eternal salvation, God only knows. But those notices which we have concerning the nature and will of God in the Scriptures, as also of the love, care, and compassion of Jesus Christ, with the ends of his mediation, do persuade us to believe, that where men in sincerity do improve the abilities and means of the knowledge of divine truth wherewith they are intrusted, endeavouring withal to answer their light and convictions with a suitable obedience, there are but few errors of the mind, of so malignant a nature, as absolutely to exclude such persons from an interest in eternal mercy. And we doubt not but that men, out of a zeal to the glory of God, real or pretended, have imprisoned, banished, killed, burned others for such errors, as it hath been the glory of God to pardon in them, and which he hath done accordingly. But this we must grant, and do, that those whose lives and conversations are no way influenced by the power of the gospel, so to be brought to some conformity thereunto; or who, under the covert of a Christian profession, do give themselves up unto idolatry and persecution of the true worshippers of God; are no otherwise to be esteemed but as enemies to the cross of Christ. For as 'without holiness no man shall see God;' so 'no idolater, or murderer, hath eternal life abiding in him.'[i]

With respect unto these things we look upon the church of England, or the generality of the nation professing Christian religion (measuring them by the doctrine that hath been preached unto them, and received by them, since the reformation), to be as sound and healthful a part of the catholic church as any in the world. For we know no place, nor nation, where the gospel for so long a season hath been preached with more diligence, power, and evidence for conviction; nor where it hath obtained a greater success or acceptation. Those therefore who perish amongst us, do not do so for want of truth, and a rig t belief, or miscarriages in sacred worship, but for their own personal infidelity and disobedience. For according to the rules before laid down, we do not judge that there are any such errors publicly admitted among them, nor any such miscarriages in sacred ad-

[i] Heb. xii. 14. Rev. xxi. 8. 1 John iii. 15.

ministration, as should directly or absolutely hinder their eternal salvation. That they be not any of them, through the ignorance or negligence of those who take upon them the conduct of their souls, encouraged in a state or way of sin, or deprived of due advantages to further their spiritual good, or are led into practices in religion neither acceptable unto God, nor tending to their own edification, whereby they may be betrayed into eternal ruin, is greatly incumbent on themselves to consider.

Unto this catholic church we owe all Christian love, and are obliged to exercise all the effects of it, both towards the whole, and every particular member, as we have advantage and occasion. And not only so, but it is our duty to live in constant communion with it. This we can no otherwise do, but by a profession of that faith, whereby it becomes the church of Christ in the notion under consideration. For any failure herein we are not, that we know of, charged by any persons of modesty or sobriety. The reflections that have been made of late by some on the doctrines we teach or own, do fall as severely on the generality of the church of England (at least until within a few years last past), as they do on us. And we shall not need to own any especial concernment in them, until they are publicly discountenanced by others. Such are the doctrines concerning God's eternal decrees, justification by faith, the loss of original grace, and the corruption of nature, the nature of regeneration, the power and efficacy of grace in the conversion of sinners, that we say not of the Trinity and satisfaction of Christ. But we do not think that the doctrines publicly taught and owned among us, ever since the reformation, will receive any great damage by the impotent assaults of some few; especially considering their management of those assaults, by tales, railing, and raillery, to the lasting reproach of the religion which themselves profess, be it what it will.

Thirdly, The church of Christ, or the visible professors of the gospel in the world, may be considered as they are disposed of by providence, or their own choice, in particular churches. These at present are of many sorts, or are esteemed so to be. For whereas the Lord Christ hath instituted sundry solemn ordinances of divine worship to be ob-

served jointly by his disciples, unto his honour and their edification, this could not be done but in such societies, communities, or assemblies of them to that purpose. And as none of them can be duly performed, but in and by such societies; so some of them do either express the union, love, and common hope that is among them, or do consist in the means of their preservation. Of this latter sort are all the ways whereby the power of Christ is acted in the discipline of the churches. Wherefore we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, as the king, ruler, and lawgiver of his church, hath ordained that all his disciples, all persons belonging unto his church in the former notions of it, should be gathered into distinct societies, and become as flocks of sheep in several folds, under the eye of their great Shepherd, and the respective conducts of those employed under him. And this conjunction of professors in and unto particular churches, for the celebration of the ordinances of sacred worship appointed by Christ, and the participation of his institutions for their edification, is not a matter of accident, or merely under the disposal of common providence; but is to be an act in them of choice and voluntary obedience unto the commands of Christ. By some this duty is more expressly attended unto than by others, and by some it is totally neglected. For neither antecedently nor consequentially unto such their conjunction, do they consider what is their duty unto the Lord Christ therein, nor what is most meet for their own edification: they go on in these things with others, according to the customs of the times and places wherein they live, confounding their civil and spiritual relations. And these we cannot but judge to walk irregularly, through ignorance, mistakes, or prejudices: neither will they in their least secular concernments, behave themselves with so much regardlessness or negligence. For however their lot previously unto their own choice, may be cast into any place or society, they will make an after-judgment whether it be to their advantage, according to the rules of prudence, and by that judgment either abide in their first station, or otherwise dispose of themselves. But a liberty of this nature regulated by the gospel, to be exercised in and about the great concernments of men's souls, is by many denied, and by most neglected. Hence it is come to pass, that the societies of

Christians are for the most part mere effects of their political distributions by civil laws, aiming principally at other ends and purposes. It is not denied but that civil distributions of professors of the gospel may be subservient unto the ends of religious societies and assemblies; but when they are made a means to take off the minds of men from all regard to the authority of the Lord Christ, instituting and appointing such societies, they are of no small disadvantage unto true church-communion and love.

The institution of these churches, and the rules for their disposal and government throughout the world, are the same; stable and unalterable. And hence there was in the first churches, planted by the apostles, and those who next succeeded them in the care of that work, great peace, union, and agreement. For they were all gathered and planted alike, according unto the institution of Christ, all regulated and ordered by the same common rule. Men had not yet found out those things which were the causes of differences in after ages, and which yet continue so to be. Where there was any difference, it was for the most part on the account of some noisome, foolish, fantastical opinions, vented by impostors, in direct opposition to the Scripture, which the generality of Christians did, with one consent, abhor. But on various occasions, and by sundry degrees, there came to be great variety in the conceptions of men about these particular churches appointed for the seat and subject of all gospel ordinances, and wherein they were authoritatively to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ: for the church, in neither of the former notions, is capable of such administrations. Some therefore rested in particular assemblies, or such societies, who did or might meet together under the guidance and inspection of their own elders, overseers, guides, or bishops:[k] and hereunto they added the occasional meetings of those elders and others, to advise and determine in common about the especial necessities of any particular church, or the general concernments of more of them, as the matter might require. These in name, and some kind of resemblance, are continued throughout the world in parochial assemblies. Others suppose a particular church to be

[k] Acts xiv. 23. xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 1—3. Acts xv. 2. Phil. i. 1.

such a one as is now called diocesan; though that name in its first use and application to church affairs was of a larger extent than what it is now applied unto, for it was of old the name of a patriarchal church. And herein the sole rule, guidance, and authoritative inspection of many, perhaps a multitude of particular churches, assembling for sacred worship and the administration of gospel ordinances distinctly, is committed unto one man, whom, in contradistinction from others, they call the bishop. For the joining of others with him, or their subordination unto him in the exercise of jurisdiction, hinders not, but that the sole ecclesiastical power of the diocese may be thought to reside in him alone: for those others do either act in his name, or by power derived from him, or have no pretence unto any authority merely ecclesiastical; however in common use, what they exercised may be so termed. But the nature of such churches, with the rule and discipline exercised in them and over them, is too well known to be here insisted on. Some rest not here, but unto these diocesan add metropolitan churches, which also are esteemed particular churches, though it be uncertain by what warrant, or on what grounds. In these one person hath in some kind of resemblance, a respect unto, and over, the diocesan bishops, like that which they have over the ministers of particular assemblies. But these things being animated and regulated by certain arbitrary rules and canons, or civil laws of the nations, the due bounds and extent of their power cannot be taken from any nature or constitution peculiar unto them. And therefore are there, wherever they are admitted, various degrees in their elevation. But how much or little the gospel is concerned in these things is easy for any one to judge. Neither is it by wise men pretended to be so, any farther than that, as they suppose, it hath left such things to be ordered by human wisdom, for an expediency unto some certain ends. One or more of these metropolitan churches have been required, in latter ages, to constitute a church national. Though the truth is, that appellation had originally another occasion; whereunto the invention of these metropolitan churches was accommodated: for it arose not from any respect unto ecclesiastical order or rule, but unto the supreme political power, whereunto the inhabitants of such a

nation as gives denomination to the church, are civilly subject. Hence that which was provincial at the first erection of this fabric, which was in the Romish empire, whilst the whole was under the power of one monarch, became national when the several provinces were turned into kingdoms, with absolute sovereign power among themselves, wholly independent of any other. And he who, in his own person and authority, would erect an ecclesiastical image of that demolished empire, will allow of such provisional churches as have a dependence upon himself; but cares not to hear of such national churches, as in their first notion include a sovereign power unto all intents and purposes within themselves. So the church of England became national in the days of king Henry the Eighth, which before was but provincial.

Moreover, the consent of many had prevailed, that there should be patriarchal churches, comprehending under their inspection and jurisdiction many of these metropolitical and provincial churches. And these also were looked on as particular; for, from their first invention, there having been four or five of them, no one of them could be imagined to comprise the catholic church; although those who presided in them, according to the pride and vanity of the declining ages of the church, styled themselves Oecumenical and Catholic. Things being carried thus far, about the fifth and sixth century of years after Christ, one owned as principal or chief of this latter sort, set up for a church denominated papal, from a title he had appropriated unto himself. For by artifices innumerable he ceased not from endeavouring to subject all those other churches and their rulers unto himself: and by the advantage of his pre-eminence over the other patriarchs, as theirs over metropolitans, and so downwards, whereby all Christians were imagined to be comprised within the precincts of some of them, he fell into a claim of a sovereignty over the whole body of Christianity and every particular member thereunto belonging. This he could have had no pretence for, but that he thought them cast into such an order, as that he might possess them on the same grounds, on which that order itself was framed: for, had not diocesan, metropolitical, and patriarchal churches made way for it, the thought of a church papal, comprehensive of all

believers, had never befallen the minds of men. For it is known, that the prodigious empire which the pope claimed, and had obtained over Christianity, was an emergency of the contests that fell out amongst the leaders of the greater sorts of churches, about the rights, titles, and pre-eminencies among themselves, with some other occasional and intestine distempers. Only he had one singular advantage for the promotion of his pretence and desire. For whereas this whole contignation of churches into all these stories, in the top whereof he emerged and lifted up himself, was nothing but an accommodation of the church and its affairs unto the government of the Roman empire, or the setting up of an ecclesiastical image and representation of its secular power and rule, the centring therein of all subordinate powers and orders in one monarch, inclined the minds of men to comply with his design, as very reasonable. Hence the principal plea for that power over the whole church which at present he claims, lies in this, that the government of it ought to be monarchical. And therein consists a chief part of the mystery of this whole work; that whereas this fabric of church-rule was erected in imitation of, and compliance with, the Roman empire; that he could never effect his sovereignty whilst that empire stood in its strength and union, under the command of one or more emperors by consent; yet when that empire was destroyed, and the provinces thereof became parcelled out unto several nations, who erected absolute independent sovereignties among themselves, he was able by the reputation he had before obtained, so to improve all emergencies and advantages, as to gather all these new kingdoms into one religious empire under himself, by their common consent. In the mean time, by the original divisions of the empire, and the revolutions that happened afterward amongst the nations of the world, the greatest number of Christians were wholly unconcerned in this new church-sovereignty which was erected in the western provinces of that empire. So was the mystery of iniquity consummated; for whereas the pope, to secure his new acquisitions, endeavoured to empale the title and privileges of the catholic church, unto those Christians which professed obedience unto himself, unto an exclusion of a greater number; there

ensued such a confusion of the catholic, and a particular church, as that both of them were almost utterly lost.

Concerning these several sorts of conceited particular churches, it is evident that some of them, as to their nature and kind, have no institution in, or warrant from, the Scripture, but were prudential contrivances of the men of the days wherein they were first formed; which they effected by various degrees, under the conduct of an apprehension that they tended unto the increase of concord and order among Christians. Whether really and effectually they have attained that end, the event hath long since manifested. And it will be one day acknowledged, that no religious union or order among Christians will be lasting, and of spiritual use or advantage unto them, but what is appointed and designed for them by Jesus Christ. The truth is, the mutual intestine differences and contests among them who first possessed the rule of such churches, about their dignities, pre-eminencies, privileges, and jurisdictions, which first apparently let in pride, ambition, revenge, and hatred, into the minds and lives of church guides, lost us the peace of Christendom; and the degeneracy of their successors more and more, into a secular interest and worldly frame of spirit, is one great means of continuing us at a loss for its retrieval.

How far any man may be obliged in conscience unto communion with these churches in those things wherein they are such, and as such behave themselves in all their rule and administrations, may be inquired into by them who are concerned. What respect we have unto them, or what duty we owe them, as they may in any place be established by the civil laws of the supreme magistrate, is not of our present consideration. But whereas in their original and rise, they have no other warrant, but the prudential contrivance of some men, who unquestionably might be variously influenced by corrupt prejudices and affections in the finding out and management of their inventions; what ground there is for holding a religious communion with them, and wherein such communion may consist, is not easy to be declared. For the notion that the church-communion of the generality of Christians and ministers, consists only in

a quiet subjection unto them, who by any means may pretend to be set over them, and claim a right to rule them, is fond and impious. In the mean time, we wholly deny that the mistakes or disorders of Christians in complying with, or joining themselves unto, such churches as have no warrantable institution ought to be any cause of the diminishing of our love towards them, or of withdrawing it from them. For notwithstanding their errors and wanderings from the paths of truth in this matter, they do, or may continue interested in all that love which is due from us unto the church of Christ upon the double account before insisted on: for they may be yet persons born of God, united unto Christ, made partakers of his Spirit, and so belong to the church catholic mystical, which is the first principal object of all Christian love and charity. The errors wherewith they are supposed to be overtaken, may befall any persons under those qualifications, the admittance of them, though culpable, being not inconsistent with a state of grace and acceptation with God. And they may also, by a due profession of the fundamental truths of the gospel, evince themselves to be professed subjects of the visible kingdom of Christ in the world, and so belong to the church catholic visibly professing; under which notion, the disciples of Christ are in the next place commended unto our love. And it is the fondest imagination in the world, that we must of necessity want love towards all those with whom we cannot join in all acts of religious worship; or that there need be any schism between them and us, on the sole account thereof, taking schism in the common received notion of it. If we bear unkindness towards them in our minds and hearts; if we desire or seek their hurt; if we persecute them, or put them to trouble in the world for their profession; if we pray not for them; if we pity them not in all their temptations, errors, or sufferings; if we say unto any of them when naked, 'Be thou clothed;' and when hungry, 'Be thou fed;' but relieve them not according unto our abilities and opportunities; if we have an aversion to their persons, or judge them any otherwise than as they cast themselves openly and visibly under the sentence of natural reason or Scripture rule, we may be justly thought to fail in our love towards them. But if our hearts condemn

us not in these things, it is not the difference that is or may be between them and us, about church-constitutions or order, that ought to be a cause, or can be an evidence of any want of love on our parts. There will indeed be a distinct and separate practice in the things wherein the difference lies, which in itself, and without other avoidable evils, need not on either side to be schismatical. If by censures or any kind of power, such churches or persons would force us to submit unto, or comply with, such things or ways in religious worship, as are contrary unto our light, and which they have no authority from the Lord Christ to impose upon us, the whole state of the case is changed, as we shall see afterward.

As for those particular churches, which in any part of the world consist of persons assembling together for the worship of God in Christ, under the guidance of their own lawful pastors and teachers, we have only to say, that we are full well assured that 'wherever two or more are gathered together in the name of Christ,' there he is present with them; and farther than this, there are very few concerning whom we are called to pass any other censure or judgment. So we hope it is with them, and so we pray that it may be. And therefore we esteem it our duty to hold that communion with all these assemblies, when called thereunto, which is required of any Christians in the like cases and circumstances. Unless we are convinced that with respect unto such or such instances, it is the mind of Christ that neither among ourselves, nor in conjunction with others, nor for the sake of the present communion with them, we should observe them in his worship, we judge ourselves under an obligation to make use of their assemblies in all acts of religion unto our edification, as occasion shall require. But where the authority of Christ in the things of sacred worship doth intervene, all other considerations must be discarded; and a compliance therewith will secure us from all irregular events.

It must be acknowledged that many of these churches have wofully degenerated, and that any of them may so do, both from their primitive institution, and also the sole rule of their worship. And this they may do, and have done in such various degrees and ways, as necessarily requires a

great variety in our judgments concerning them, and our communion with them. The whole Christian world gives us instances hereof at this day; yea, we have it confirmed unto us in what is recorded concerning sundry churches mentioned in the Scripture itself. They were newly planted by the apostles themselves, and had rules given by them to attend unto for their direction. And besides they were obliged in all emergencies to inquire after and receive those commands and directions, which they were enabled infallibly to give unto them. And yet notwithstanding these great advantages, we find that sundry of them were suddenly fallen into sinful neglects, disorders, and miscarriages, both in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Some of these were reproved and reformed by the great apostle, in his epistles written unto them for that end: and some of them were rebuked and threatened by the Lord Christ himself immediately from heaven.[1] That in process of time they have increased in their degeneracy, waxing worse and worse; their present state and condition in the world, or the remembrance of them which are now not at all, with the severe dealings of God with them in his holy wise providence do sufficiently manifest. Yea some of them, though yet continuing under other forms and shapes, have by their superstition, false worship, and express idolatry, joined with wickedness of life and persecution of the true worshippers of Christ; as also by casting themselves into a new worldly constitution, utterly foreign unto what is appointed in the gospel, abandoned their interest in the state and rights of the churches of Christ. So are sundry faithful cities become harlots; and where righteousness inhabited, there dwells persecuting murderers. Such churches were planted of Christ wholly noble vines, but are degenerated into those that are bitter and wild. Whatever our judgment may be concerning the personal condition of the members of such apostatized churches, or any of them; all communion with them, as they would be esteemed the seat of gospel ordinances, and in their pretended administrations of them, is unlawful for us; and it is our indispensable duty to separate from them. For whatever indifferency many

[1] Rev. iii. 3.

may be growing into in matter of outward worship, which ariseth from ignorance of the respect that is between the grace and institutions of Christ, as that, from an apprehension that all internal religion consists in moral honesty only; yet we know not any other way whereby we may approve ourselves faithful in our profession, but in the observance of all whatever Christ hath commanded,[m] and to abstain from what he condemns. For both our faith and love, whatever we pretend, will be found vain, if we endeavour not to keep his commandments.[n]

Such was the state of things in the church of Israel of old, after the defection under Jeroboam. It was no more a true church, nor any church at all, by virtue of positive institution: for they had neither priests, nor sacrifices, nor any ordinances of public worship, that God approved of. Hence it was the duty of all that feared God in the ten tribes, not to join with the leaders and body of the people in their worship; as also to observe those sacred institutions of the law, which were forbidden by them, in the order that they should not go up to Jerusalem,[o] but attend unto all their sacred solemnities in the places where the calves were set up. Accordingly many of the most zealous professors among them, with the priests and Levites, and with a great multitude of the people, openly separated from the rest, and joined themselves unto Judah in the worship of God, continued therein. Others amongst them secretly in the worst of times preserved themselves from the abominations of the whole people. In like manner under the New Testament, when some have deserved the title of Babylon, because of their idolatry, false worship, and persecution, we are commanded 'to come out from among them,' in an open visible professed separation, that we be not partakers of their sins and plagues. But this judgment we are not to make, nor do make concerning any, but such as among whom idolatry spreads itself over the face of all their solemn assemblies, and who join thereunto the persecution of them who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth. The constitution of such churches, as to their being acceptable assemblies of worshippers before God, is lost and dissolved: neither is it lawful for any disciple of Christ to partake with

[m] Matt. xxviii. 20. [n] John xv. 10. 14. [o] 2 Chron. xi. xiii. 1 Kings xii. xiii.

them in their sacred administrations; for so to do, is plainly to disown the authority of Christ, or to set up that of wicked and corrupt men above it.

Yet all this hinders not but that there may in such apostatical churches remain a profession of the fundamental truths of the gospel. And by virtue thereof, as they maintain the interest of Christ's visible kingdom in the world; so we no way doubt but that there may be many amongst them, who by a saving faith in the truths they do profess, do really belong to the mystical church of Christ.

An instituted church therefore may, by the crimes and wickedness of its rulers, and the generality of its members, and their idolatrous administrations in holy things, utterly destroy their instituted estate, and yet not presently all of them cease to belong unto the kingdom of Christ. For we cannot say, that those things which will certainly annul church-administrations, and render them abominable, will absolutely destroy the salvation of all individual persons who partake in them; and many may secretly preserve themselves from being defiled with such abominations. So in the height of the degeneracy and apostacy of the Israelitish church, there were seven thousand who kept themselves pure from Baalish idolatry, of whom none were known to Elijah. And therefore did God still continue a respect unto them as his people, because of those secret ones, and because the token of his covenant was yet in their flesh; affording unto them an extraordinary ministry by his prophets, when the ordinary by priests and Levites was utterly ceased. This we are to hope concerning every place where there is any profession made of the name of Christ; seeing it was the passion of Elijah which caused him to oversee so great a remnant as God had left unto himself in the kingdom of Israel. And from his example we may learn, that good men may sometimes be more severe in their censures for God, than he will be for himself.

Moreover, such as were baptized in those churches, were not baptized into them as particular churches, nor initiated into them thereby; but the relation which ensued unto them thereon, was unto the catholic church visible, together with a separation from the infidel world, lying wholly in darkness and evil, by a dedication unto the name of Christ.

Upon a personal avowment of that faith whereinto they were baptized, they became complete members of that church. Whatever state they are hereby admitted into, whatever benefit or privilege they are personally interested in, they lose them not by the miscarriage of that particular church whereunto they do relate: yea, losing the whole advantage of an instituted church-state, they may still retain whatever belongs unto their faith and profession. Were baptism only an institution into a particular church, upon the failure of that church, baptism, as to all its benefits and privileges, must cease also. We do therefore own, that amongst those whose assemblies are rejected by Christ, because of their false worship and wickedness, there may be persons truly belonging to the mystical church of God, and that also by their profession are a portion of his visible kingdom in the world. How far they do consent unto the abominations of the churches whereunto they do belong, how far they have light against them, how far they do bewail them, how far they repent of them, what God will bear withal in them, we know not, nor are called to judge. Our love is to be towards them as persons relating unto Jesus Christ in the capacity mentioned; but all communion with them in the acts of false worship is forbidden unto us. By virtue also of that relation which they still continue unto Christ and his church as believers, they have power, and are warranted (as it is their duty) to reform themselves, and to join together anew in church-order, for the due celebration of gospel ordinances, unto the glory of Christ, and their own edification. For it is fond to imagine, that by the sins of others, any disciples of Christ in any place of the world, should be deprived of a right to perform their duty towards him, when it is discovered unto them. And these are our thoughts concerning such churches as are openly and visibly apostatical.

Again, there are corruptions that may befall or enter into churches that are not of so heinous a nature as those before insisted on: especially if, as it often falls out, the whole lump be not leavened; if the whole body be not infected, but only some part or parts of it, which others more sound do resist and give their testimony against. And these may have none of the pernicious consequences before mentioned. Thus many errors in doctrines disorders, and miscarriages in sacred ad-

ministrations, irregular walking in conversation, with neglect or abuse of discipline in rulers, may fall out in some churches, which yet may be so far from evacuating their church-state, as that they give no sufficient warrant unto any person immediately to leave their communion or to separate from them. The instances that may be given of the failings of some of the primitive churches in all these things, with the consideration of the apostolical directions given unto them on such occasions, render this assertion evident and uncontrollable. Nor do we in the least approve of their practice (if any such there be that are considerable), who upon every failing in these things in any church, think themselves sufficiently warranted immediately of their own minds, to depart from its communion. Much more do we condemn them who suffer themselves in these things to be guided by their own surmises and misapprehensions. For such there may be as make their own hasty conceptions to be the rule of all church administrations and communion; who unless they are in all things pleased, can be quiet nowhere. Wherefore when any church, whereof a man is by his own consent antecedently a member, doth fall in part or in whole from any of those truths which it hath professed, or when it is overtaken with a neglect of discipline, or irregularities in its administration, such a one is to consider, that he is placed in his present state by divine providence, that he may orderly therein endeavour to put a stop unto such defections, and to exercise his charity, love, and forbearance towards the persons of them whose miscarriages at present he cannot remedy. In such cases there is a large and spacious field for wisdom, patience, love, and prudent zeal to exercise themselves. And it is a most perverse imagination that separation is the only cure for church disorders. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on church-members, to be exercised in their several stations at such a season, all instructions given for their due improvement unto the good of the whole; the nature, rules, and laws of all societies, declare that all other remedies possible and lawful are to be attempted, before a church be finally deserted. But these rules are to be observed, provided always that it be judged unlawful for any persons, either for the sake of peace, or order, or concord, or on any other consideration, to join actually in any thing

that is sinful, or to profess any opinion which is contrary to sound doctrine or the form of wholesome words, which we are bound to hold fast on all emergencies. And farther, if we may suppose, as sure enough we may, that such a church so corrupted shall obstinately persist in its errors, miscarriages, neglects, and maleadministrations; that it shall refuse to be warned or admonished, or being so by any means, shall wilfully reject and despise all instruction; that it will not bear with them that are yet sound in it, whether elders or members, in peaceable endeavours to reduce it unto the order of the gospel, but shall rather hurt, persecute, and seek their trouble for so doing, whereby their edification comes continually to be obstructed, and their souls to be hazarded through the loss of truth and peace; we no way doubt but that it is lawful for such persons to withdraw themselves from the communion of such churches, and that without any apprehension that they have absolutely lost their church-state or are totally rejected by Jesus Christ. For the means appointed unto any end, are to be measured and regulated according unto their usefulness unto that end. And let men's present apprehensions be what they will, it will one day appear that the end of all church-order, rule, communion, and administrations, is not the grandeur or secular advantages of some few, not outward peace and quietness, unto whose preservation the civil power is ordained; but the edification of the souls of men in faith, love, and gospel obedience. Where, therefore, these things are so disposed of and managed, as that they do not regularly further and promote that end, but rather obstruct it, if they will not be reduced unto their due order and tendency, they may be laid aside and made use of in another way. Much more may any refuse the communion of such churches, if they impose on them their corruptions, errors, failings, and mistakes, as the condition of their communion: for hereby they directly make themselves lords over the faith and worship of the disciples of Christ, and are void of all authority from him in what they so do or impose. And it is so far, that any men's withdrawing of themselves from the communion of such churches, and entering into a way of reformation for their own good, in obedience to the laws of Christ, should infer in them a want of love and peaceableness, or a spirit of di-

vision, that to do otherwise were to divide from Christ and to cast out all true Christian love, embracing a cloud of slothful negligence and carelessness in the great concernments of the glory of God and their own souls in the room thereof. We are neither the authors nor the guides of our own love: he who implants and worketh it in us, hath given us rules how it must be exercised, and that on all emergencies. It may work as regularly by sharp cutting rebukes, as by the most silken and compliant expressions; by manifesting an aversation from all that is evil, as by embracing and approving of what is good. In all things and cases it is to be directed by the word. And when under the pretence of it we leave that rule, and go off from any duty which we owe immediately unto God, it is will, pride, and self-conceit in us, and not love. And among all the exhortations that are given us in the Scripture unto unity and concord, as the fruits of love, there is not one that we should agree or comply with any in their sins or evil practices. But as we are commanded in ourselves to abstain 'from all appearance of evil,' so are we forbidden a participation in the sins of other men, and all 'fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness.' Our love towards such churches is to work by pity, compassion, prayer, instructions, which are due means for their healing and recovery; not by consent unto them or communion with them, whereby they may be hardened in the error of their way and our own souls be subverted: for if we have not a due respect unto the Lord Christ and his authority, all that we have or may pretend to have unto any church, is of no value. Neither ought we to take into consideration any terms of communion, whose foundation is not laid in a regard thereunto.

Moreover (as hath been declared), there is no such society of Christians in the world, whose assemblies, as to instituted worship, are rejected by Christ, so that they have a bill of divorce given unto them by the declaration of the will of the Lord Jesus to that purpose in the Scripture; but that until they are utterly also as it were extirpate by the providence of God (as are many of the primitive plantations), we are persuaded of them that there are yet some secret hidden ones among them that belong unto the purpose of God's grace. For we do judge that wherever th

name of Jesus Christ is called upon, there is salvation to be obtained; however the ways of it may be obstructed unto the most by their own sins and errors. They may also retain that profession which distinguisheth them from the infidel world. In these things we are still to hold communion with them; and on these accounts is our love to be continued unto them. Some kind of communion we may hold with them that are of no instituted or particular churches, or whose church-state is rejected, even as a person excommunicated is to be admonished as a brother. And some kind of communion we may lawfully refuse with some true churches; instances whereof shall be given afterward.

There is, therefore, no necessity that any should deny all them to be true churches, from whom they may have just reason to withdraw their communion. For such as are so may require such things thereunto as it is not lawful for them to accept of or submit unto. What assemblies of Christians we behold visibly worshipping God in Christ, we take for granted to be true visible churches. And when we judge of our own communion with them, it is not upon this question, whether they are true churches or no, as though the determination of our practice did depend solely thereon: for as we are not called to judge of the being of their constitution, as to the substance of it, unless they are openly judged in the Scripture, as in the case of idolatry and persecution persisted in; so a determination of the truth of their constitution, or that they are true churches, will not presently resolve us in our duty as to communion with them for the reasons before given. But in such a case, two things are by us principally to be considered. 1. That nothing sinful in itself, or unto us, be required of us as the condition of communion. 2. That we may in such churches obtain the immediate end of their institution and our conjunction with them, which is our edification in faith, love, and obedience.

And the things whereof we have discoursed, comprise our thoughts concerning those societies of Christians, whose degeneracy from their primitive rule and institution is most manifest and notorious. Whilst there is any profession of the gospel, any subjection of souls unto Jesus Christ avowed, or any expectation of help from him continued among them, we cannot but hope that there are in all of

them, at least some few names that 'are written in the Lamb's book of life,' and which shall be saved eternally. For as a relation unto a particular visible church walking according to the order and rule of the gospel, is the duty of every believer to give himself up unto; as that which is a means appointed and sanctified to the furtherance of his edification and salvation; so where it cannot be obtained through invincible outward impediments, or is omitted through ignorance of duty, or is on just causes refused where opportunities make a tender of it, or where the being and benefit of it is lost through the apostacy of those churches whereunto any persons did belong; the utter want of it, and that always, is not such as necessarily infers the eternal loss of their souls who suffer under it.

Other churches there are in the world, which are not evidently guilty of the enormities in doctrine, worship, and discipline, before discoursed of. These all we judge to be true churches of Christ; and do hope that his promised presence is with them in their assemblies. Answerable hereunto is our judgment concerning their officers or rulers, and all their sacred administrations. It becomes us to think and believe, that the one have authority from Christ; and that the other are accepted with him. For it is most unwarrantable rashness and presumption, yea, an evident fruit of ignorance, or want of love, or secular private interest, when, upon lesser differences men judge churches to be no true churches, and their ministers to be no true ministers, and consequently all their administrations to be invalid. So do some judge of churches, because they have no bishops; and so do more of others, because they have none. But the validity or invalidity of the ordinances of Christ, which are the means of union and communion with him unto all his disciples, depend not on the determination of things highly disputable in their notion, and not inconsistent with true gospel obedience in their practice. And we are unduly charged with other apprehensions. God forbid that any such thought should ever enter into our hearts, as though the churches constituted in all things according unto our light, and the rules we apprehend appointed in the Scripture for that purpose, should be the only true churches in the world. They do but out of design, endeavour to expose

us to popular envy and hatred, who invent and publish such things concerning us, or any of us. But whatever be the judgment of others concerning us, we intend not to take from thence any such provocation as might corrupt our judgments concerning them; nor to relieve ourselves by returning the like censures unto them, as we receive from them. Scripture rule and duty must in these matters regulate our thoughts on all occasions. And whilst we judge others to be true churches, we shall not be much moved with their judgment that we are none, because we differ from them. We stand to the judgment of Christ and his word. We cannot but judge indeed that many churches have missed, and do miss in some things the precise rules of their due constitution and walking; that many of them have added useless superfluous rites to the worship of God among them; that there is in many of them a sinful neglect of evangelical discipline, or a carnal rule erected in the stead of it; that errors in doctrines of importance and danger are prevalent in sundry of them; that their rulers are much influenced by a spirit of bitterness and envy against such as plead for reformation beyond their measure or interest; yet that hereupon they should all or any of them immediately forfeit their church-state, so as to have no lawful ministers, nor acceptable sacred administrations, is in itself a false imagination, and such as was never by us entertained.

In particular, as to those churches in Europe, which are commonly called reformed; we have the same thoughts of them, the same love towards them, the same readiness for communion with them, as we would desire any disciples of Christ in the world to have, bear, or exercise towards ourselves. If we are found negligent in any office of love towards them, or any of their members, in compassion, help, or assistance, or such supplies in outward or inward things as we have opportunity or ability for, we are willing to bear the guilt of it as our sin, and the reproach of it as our shame. And herein we desire to fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The same we say concerning all the churches in England of the same mould and constitution with them, especially if it be true which some say, that parochial churches are under a force and power, whereby they are enjoined the practice of

sundry things, and forbidden the performance of others, wherein the compliance of some is not over-voluntary, nor pleasing to themselves. Neither is there a nullity or invalidity in the ordinances administered in them any otherwise than as some render them ineffectual unto themselves by their unbelief. And this is the paganizing of England which some of us are traduced for. We believe that among the visible professors in this nation, there is as great a number of sincere believers as in any nation under heaven; so that in it are treasured up a considerable portion of the invisible mystical church of Christ. We believe that the generality of the inhabitants of this nation, are by their profession constituted an eminent part of the kingdom of Christ in this world. And we judge not, we condemn not those, who walking according to their light and understanding in particular rites, do practise such things in the worship of God as we cannot comply withal. For we do not think that the things wherein they fail, wherein they miss, or outgo the rule, are in their own nature absolutely destructive of their particular church-state. And what more can reasonably be required of us, or expected from us in this matter we know not. The causes of the distance that doth remain between us and them shall be afterward inquired into. For our duty in particular presential communion, at the celebration of the same individual ordinances, with such churches as are remote from us in Asia or Africa, we shall we hope be directed to determine aright concerning it, when we are called thereunto. In the mean time, what are our thoughts concerning them hath been before declared: to love them as subjects of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the world, to pray for them that they may have all needful supplies of grace, and the Holy Spirit from above, that God would send out his light and truth to guide them in their worship and obedience, and to help them in things spiritual and temporal, as we have opportunity, is the sum of the duty which is required in us towards them. Those we are more concerned in who are within the lines of our ordinary communication, among whom we walk and converse in the world. Unto any of these it is in the liberty and power of every believer to join himself by his own consent. And no more is required hereunto, in the present constitution of churches among ourselves, but that

a man remove his habitation, to comply with his own desires herein: and this choice is to be regulated by a judgment how a man may best improve and promote his own edification. We see not therefore how any man, with the least pretence of sobriety or modesty, can charge us with the want of an esteem and valuation of evangelical unity; for we embrace it on all the grounds that it is in the gospel recommended unto us. And we do know within what narrow bounds the charity and unity of some are confined, who yet advantage themselves by a noise of their pretence. But that we do not in the least disturb, break, or dissent from the catholic church, either as it is invisible, in its internal form, by faith and the renovation of the Holy Ghost, or as visibly professing necessary fundamental truths of the gospel, we have sufficiently evinced. And the principles laid down concerning particular churches, congregations, assemblies, or parishes, have not as yet been detected by any to spring from want of love, or to be obstructive of the exercise of it. Having therefore thus briefly given some account of what we conceive to be our duty in relation unto the whole church of God, we can with confidence and much assurance of mind, own as dear a valuation of love, unity, and peaceableness in the profession of the gospel, as any sort of professors whatever. And we are persuaded that our principles do as much tend and conduce unto the improvement of them, as any that are or can be proposed unto that end. For we either do, or are in a readiness to embrace every thing or way, that the Lord Christ hath appointed, or doth bless thereunto.

We doubt not, as hath been before acknowledged, but that there have been many failings and sinful miscarriages among all sorts of professors, who separate, or are rather driven from the present public worship. There is no question but that in them all there are some remainders of the bitter root of corrupt affections, which under the various temptations and provocations they have been exposed unto, hath brought forth fruit of an unpleasant relish. It is no new thing that irregular prejudices should be found acting themselves in professors of the gospel: it hath been so among them from the beginning. And we hope that where there is or hath been any guilt of this nature, that the reproofs

which have been publicly given unto it (with what spirit or intention soever managed) may be useful to the amendment of them who have offended. But for our own parts, we must bear this testimony unto our sincerity, that we not only condemn, but abhor all evil surmises among professors, all rash and uncharitable censures, all causeless aversions of mind and affections, all strife, wrath, anger, and debate, upon the account of different apprehensions and practices in and about the concerns of religious worship. Much more do we cast out all thoughts of judging men's eternal state and condition with respect unto such differences; nor do we, nor dare we, give countenance unto any thing that is in the least really opposite to love, peace, unity, or concord, amongst the disciples of Christ. And as we shall not excuse any of those extravagancies and intemperate heats in words or otherwise, which some it may be have been guilty of, until their repentance must bear their own judgment; so we will not make a recharge on others who differ in persuasion from us, of the same or the like crimes; nor indeed need we so to do, their principles and practices, contrary unto all Christian love and charity, being written as with the beams of the sun. And we do not complain of our lot in the world, that the appearance of such things in any of us would be esteemed a scandalous crime, which others that condemn them in us indulge in themselves without the least check or control. The law of this condition is put upon us by the profession which we do avow. Only we are not willing that any should make advantage against us by their pleas, for love, unity, and concord, as if indeed they were for peace, but that we make ourselves ready for war. Could they convince us that we come behind them in the valuation and seeking after these things by all ways and means blessed by Christ to that purpose, we should judge ourselves with a severity at least commensurate to the utmost they are able to exercise against us, whilst free from malice and evil designs. Only we must add, that there is no true measure of love to be taken by the accessions that men can make towards them who depart from truth. If it were so, those must be judged to abound most with it, who can most comply with the practices of the church of Rome. But we are persuaded that such discourses, with the application of

them unto those who differ from their authors, do proceed from sincerity in them; only, as we fear, somewhat leavened with an apprehension that their judgments and practices being according unto truth, ought to be the standard and measure of other men's; perhaps no less sincere and confident of the truth than themselves, though differing from them. And hence it is unhappily fallen out, that in the reproofs which some do manage on the foundations mentioned, and in the way of their management, many do suppose that there is as great an appearance, if not evidence of evil surmises, ungrounded temerarious censures, of self-conceit and elation of mind, of hard thoughts of, undue charges on, and the contempt of others, and in all of a want of real love, condescension, and compassion, as in any things that are true, and to be really found among professors blamed by them. For these things, both as charged and recharged, have a double appearance. Those from whom they proceed look on them in the light of that sincerity and integrity which they are conscious of to themselves, wherein they seem amiable, useful, and free from all offence; whereas others that are concerned viewing of them in the disordered reflections of their opposition unto them, and the disadvantage which they undergo by them, do apprehend them quite of another nature. And it is a matter of trouble unto us, to find that when some are severely handled for those principles and ways wherein they can and do commend their consciences unto God, and thereby apprehending that their intentions, purposes, principles, and affections, are injuriously traduced and perverted; they fall with an equal severity on them by whom they are reproved, though their reproofs proceed from an equal sincerity unto what themselves profess and expect to be believed in. Especially are such mutual reflections grievous and irksome unto men, when they apprehend that in them, or by them, professed friends do industriously expose them to the contempt and wrath of professed adversaries.

CHAP. IV.

Want of love and unity among Christians justly complained of. Causes of divisions and schisms. 1. *Misapprehensions of evangelical unity. Wherein it doth truly consist. The ways and means whereby it may be obtained and preserved. Mistakes about both.* 2. *Neglect in churches to attend unto known gospel duty. Of preaching unto conversion and edification. Care of those that are really godly. Of discipline: how neglected, how corrupted. Principles seducing churches and their rulers into miscarriages.* 1. *Confidence of their place.* 2. *Contempt of the people.* 3. *Trust unto worldly grandeur. Other causes of divisions. Remainders of corruption from the general apostacy. Meekness and ignorance. Of readiness to take offences. Remedies hereof. Pride. False teachers.*

Upon the whole matter, it is generally acknowledged that there is a great decay of love, a great want of peace and unity among professors of the gospel in the world. And it is no less evident, nor less acknowledged, that these things are frequently commanded and enjoined unto them in the Scripture. Might they be obtained, it would greatly further the ends of the gospel and answer the mind of Christ: and their loss is obstructive unto the one, and no less dishonourable unto that profession which is made of the name of the other. For the divisions of Christians (occasioned chiefly by false notions of unity, and undue means of attaining it) are the chief cause of offences unto them who are yet strangers from Christianity. The Jews object unto us the wars among Christians, which they suppose shall have no place under the kingdom and reign of the true Messiah. And we have been reproached with our intestine differences by Gentiles and Mahometans. For those who never had either peace or love or unity among themselves, do yet think meet to revile us with the want of them; because they know how highly we are obliged unto them. But any men may be justly charged with the neglect of that duty which they profess, if they be found defective therein. Under the sad effects of the want of these things we may labour long enough, if we endeavour not to take away the causes of it. And yet in the entrance of our disquisition after them we are again entangled. Christians cannot come to an agreement about these causes, and so live under the severity of

their effects, as not being able to conclude on a remedy. The multitude of them is here divided, and one crieth one thing, another another: most place the cause of all our differences in a dissent from themselves and their judgments; yea, they do so apparently who yet disavow their so doing. And it may be here expected that we should give some account of our thoughts as to the causes of these differences whereof we also have now complained, so far as they are contrary to the nature, or obstructive of the ends of the gospel. We shall therefore briefly endeavour the satisfaction of such as may have those expectations. Particular evils which contribute much unto our divisions we shall not insist upon; much less shall we reflect upon and aggravate the failings of others, whether persons or societies. Some of the principal and more general reasons and causes of them, especially amongst Protestants, it shall suffice us to enumerate.

The principal cause of our divisions and schisms, is no other than the ignorance or misapprehension that is among Christians, of the true nature of that evangelical unity which they ought to follow after, with the ways and means whereby it may be attained and preserved. Hence it is come to pass, that in the greatest pleas for unity and endeavours after it, most men have pursued a shadow, and fought uncertainly, as those that beat the air. For having lost every notion of gospel unity, and not loving the thing itself, under what terms soever proposed unto them, they consigned the name of it unto, and clothed with its ornaments and privileges a vain figment of their own, which the Lord Christ never required, nor ever blessed any in their endeavours to attain. And when they had changed the end, it was needful for them also to change the means of attaining it; and to substitute those in their room which were suited to the new mark and aim they had erected. Farther to evidence these things, we shall give some account of the nature of evangelical unity, the means of attaining it, with the false notion of it that some have embraced, and the corrupt means which they have used for the compassing of the same.

First, That unity which is recommended unto us in the gospel is spiritual; and in that which is purely so, lies the foundation of the whole. Hence it is called 'the unity of

the Spirit,' which is to be kept 'in the bond of peace;' because there is one body, and one spirit, whereby that body is animated.[a] Thus all true believers become one in the Father and the Son; or perfect in one.[b] It is their participation of, and quickening by, the same Spirit that is in Christ Jesus, whereby they become his body, or members of it, 'even of his flesh and of his bones;'[c] that is, no less really partakers of the same divine spiritual nature with him,[d] than Eve was of the nature of Adam, when she was made of his flesh and his bones.[e] The real union of all true believers unto the Lord Christ as their head, wrought by his Spirit which dwelleth in them, and communicates of his grace unto them, is that which we intend. For as hereby they become one with, and in him, so they come to be one among themselves, as his body; and all the members of the body, being many, are yet but one body, wherein their oneness among themselves doth consist. The members of the body have divers forms or shapes, divers uses and operations, much more may be diversely clothed and adorned; yet are they one body still, wherein their unity doth consist. And it were a ridiculous thing to attempt the appearance of a dead useless unity among the members of the body by clothing of them all in the same kind of garments or covering. But granting them their unity by their relation unto the head, and thence to one another, unto the constitution of the whole; and their different forms, shapes, uses, operations, ornaments, all tend to make them serviceable in their unity unto their proper ends. And saith the apostle, 'as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.'[f] And he doth elsewhere so describe this fundamental unity of believers in one body, under, and in dependence on, the same head, as to make it the only means of the usefulness and preservation of the whole. They 'grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and

[a] Eph. iv. 3, 4. [b] John xvii. 21, 22. [c] Eph. v. 30. [d] 2 Pet. i. 4.
[e] Gen. v. 2, 3. [f] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.[g] The conjunctions of all the members into one body, their mutual usefulness unto one another, the edification of the whole, with its increase, the due exercise of love (which things contain the whole nature, and the utmost ends of all church-communion) do depend merely and solely upon, and flow from, the relation that the members have to the head, and their union with him. He speaketh again to the same purpose in the reproof of them, who 'hold not the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.'[h] This is the foundation of all gospel unity among believers, whereunto all other things which are required unto the completing of it, are but accessory; nor are they, without this, of any value or acceptation in the sight of God. Whatever order, peace, concord, union in the church, any one may hold or keep, who is not interested herein, he is but like a stone in a building, laid, it may be, in a comely order, but not cemented and fixed unto the whole, which renders its station useless to the building, and unsafe unto itself; or like a dead, mortified part of the body, which neither receives any vital influence from the head, nor administers nourishment unto any other part. Now it cannot be denied but that in the contests that are in the world about church-union and divisions, with what is pleaded about their nature and causes, there is little or no consideration had thereof. Yea, those things are principally insisted on for the constituting of the one, and the avoiding of the other, which cast a neglect, yea, a contempt upon it. It is the Romanists who make the greatest outcries about church-union, and who make the greatest advantage by what they pretend so to be. But hereunto they contend expressly on the one side, that it is indispensably necessary that all Christians should be subject to the pope of Rome, and united unto him; and, on the other, that it is not necessary at all that any of them be spiritually and savingly united unto Christ. Others also place it in various instances of

[g] Eph. iv. 15, 16. [h] Col. ii. 19.

conformity unto, and compliance with, the commands of men, which, if they are observed, they are wondrous cold in their inquiries after this relation unto the head. But the truth is, that where any one is interested in this foundation of all gospel unity, he may demand communion with any church in the world, and ought not to be refused, unless in case of some present offence or scandal. And those by whom such persons are rejected from communion, to be held on gospel terms, on the account of some differences not intrenching on this foundation, do exercise a kind of church tyranny, and are guilty of the schism which may ensue thereon. So on the other side, where this is wanting, men's compliance with any other terms or conditions that may be proposed unto them, and their obtaining of church-communion thereon, will be of little advantage unto their souls.

Secondly, Unto this foundation of gospel unity among believers, for and unto the due improvement of it, there is required a unity of faith, or of the belief and profession of the same divine truth. For as there is one Lord, so also one faith and one baptism unto believers. And this ariseth from, and followeth the other. For those who are so united unto Christ, are all taught of God to believe the truths which are necessarily required thereunto. And however by the power of temptation they may fall in it, or from it for a season, as did Peter, yet, through the love and care of Jesus Christ, they are again recovered. Now unto this unity of faith two things are required: First, A precise and express profession of the fundamental articles of Christian religion. For we outwardly hold the head by a consent unto the form of wholesome words wherein the doctrine of it is contained. Of the number and nature of such fundamental truths, whose express acknowledgment belongs unto the unity of faith, so much hath been discoursed by others, as that we need not add any thing thereunto. The sum is, that they are but few, plainly delivered in the Scripture; evidencing their own necessity; all conducing to the begetting and increase of that spiritual life, whereby we live unto God. Secondly, It is required hereunto, that in other things and duties, 'every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,' and walking according to what he hath attained, do follow peace and

love, with those who are otherwise persuaded than he is.[i] For the unity of faith did never consist in the same precise conceptions of all revealed objects: neither the nature of man, nor the means of revelation, will allow such a unity to be morally possible. And the figment of supplying this variety by an implicit faith, is ridiculous. For herein faith is considered as professed; and no man can make profession of what he knoweth not. It is therefore condescension and mutual forbearance whereby the unity of faith, consisting in the joint belief of necessary truths, is to be reserved with respect unto other things about which differences may arise.

Yet is not this so to be understood as though Christians, especially ministers of the gospel, should content themselves with the knowledge of such fundamentals, or confine their Scripture inquiries unto them. Whatever is written in the Scripture, is 'written for our instruction;'[k] and it is our duty to search diligently into the whole counsel of God therein revealed: yea, to inquire with 'all diligence,'[l] in the use of all means, and the improvement of all advantages, with fervent supplications for light and aid from above, into the whole mystery of the will of God, as revealed in the Scripture, and all the parts of it, is the principal duty that is incumbent on us in this world. And those who take upon them to be ministers and instructors of others, by whom this is neglected, who take up with a superficiary knowledge of general principles, and those such for the most part as have a coincidence with the light of nature, do but betray the souls of those over whom they usurp a charge, and are unworthy of the title and office which they bear. Neither is there any thing implied in the means of preserving the unity of faith, that should hinder us from explaining, confirming, and vindicating any truth that we have received, wherein others differ from us; provided that what we do, be done with a spirit of meekness and love: yea, our so doing is one principal means of ministering nourishment unto the body, whereby the whole is increased as 'with the increase of God.'

But in the room of all this, what contendings, fightings,

[i] Rom. xiv. 5. Phil. iii. 15.
[k] 1 Cor. x. 11.
[l] 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

destructions of men, body, and soul, upon variety of judgments about sacred things, have been introduced by the crafts of Satan and the carnal interest of men of corrupt minds, is known to all the world.

Thirdly, There is a unity of love that belongs unto the evangelical unity which we are in the description of. For love is the bond of perfection, that whereby all the members of the body of Christ are knit together among themselves, and which renders all the other ingredients of this unity useful unto them. And as we have discoursed of the nature of this love before, so the exercise of it, as it hath an actual influence into gospel unity among Christians, may be reduced unto two heads. For, first, It worketh effectually according to the measure of them in whom it is, in the contribution of supplies of grace and light, and helps of obedience unto other members of the body. Every one in whom this love dwelleth, according to his ability, call, and opportunities, which make up his measure, will communicate the spiritual supplies which he receiveth from the head Christ Jesus unto others, by instructions, exhortations, consolations, and example, unto their edification. This he will do in love, and unto the ends of love; namely, to testify a joint relation unto Christ the head of all, and the increase of the whole by supplies of life from him. Instead hereof, some have invented bonds of ecclesiastical unity, which may bind men together in some appearance of order, whilst in the mean time they live in envy, wrath, and malice, biting and devouring one another; or if there be any thing of love among them, it is that which is merely natural, or carnal and sensual, working by a joint consent in delights and pleasure, or at best in civil things, belonging unto their conversation in this world. The love that is among such persons in this world is of the world, and will perish with the world. But it is a far easier thing to satisfy conscience with a pretence of preserving church-unity, by an acquiescency in some outward rules and constitutions, wherein men's minds are little concerned, than to attend diligently unto the due exercise of this grace of love, against all oppositions and temptations unto the contrary: for indeed the exercise of this love requires a sedulous and painful labour; Heb. vi. 10. But yet this is that alone which is the bond of peferction unto the

disciples of Christ, and without which all other pretences or appearances of unity are of no value with him. Secondly, This love acts itself by forbearance and condescension towards the infirmities, mistakes, and faults of others; wherein, of what singular use it is for the preservation of church-peace and order, the apostle at large declares, 1 Cor. xiii.

Fourthly, The Lord Christ by his kingly authority hath instituted orders for rule, and ordinances for worship,[m] to be observed in all his churches. That they be attended unto, and celebrated in a due manner, belongs unto the unity which he requires among his disciples. To this end he communicates supplies of spiritual ability and wisdom, or the gifts of his Spirit, unto the guides and rulers of his churches, for their administration unto edification. And hereon, if a submission unto his authority be accompanied with a due attendance unto the rule of the word, no such variety or difference will ensue as shall impeach that unity which is the duty of them all to attend unto.

In these things doth consist that evangelical church-unity which the gospel recommends unto us, and which the Lord Christ prayed for[n] with respect unto all that should believe on his name. One Spirit, one faith, one love, one Lord, there ought to be in and unto them all. In the possession of this unity, and no other, were the first churches left by the apostle: and had they in succeeding generations continued according to their duty in the preservation and liberty of it, all those scandalous divisions which afterward fell out among them on account of pre-eminences, jurisdictions, liturgies, rites, ceremonies, violently or fraudulently obtruded on their communion, had been prevented.[o]

The ways and means whereby this unity may be obtained and preserved amongst Christians, are evident from the nature of it: for whereas it is spiritual, none other are suited thereunto; nor hath the Lord Christ appointed any other but his Spirit and his word. For to this end doth he promise the presence of his Spirit[p] among them that believe, unto the consummation of all things. And this he doth, both as to lead and 'guide them unto all truth' necessary unto the ends mentioned, so to assist and help them in the orderly per-

[m] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Eph. iv. 8—13. [n] John xvii. 20—22.
[o] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. [p] Matt. xxviii. 20. John xiv. 16.

formances of their duties in and about them. His word also, as the rule which they are to attend unto, he hath committed unto them; and other ways and means for the compassing of this end, besides the due improvement of spiritual assistances in a compliance with the holy rule, he hath not designed or appointed.

This is that gospel unity which we are to labour after, and these are the means whereby we may do so. But now through the mistake of the minds of men, with the strong influence which carnal and corrupt interests have upon them, we know how it hath been despised, and what hath been set up in the room thereof, and what have been the means whereby it hath been pursued and promoted. We may take an instance in those of the church of Rome. No sort of Christians in the world (as we have already observed) do at this day more pretend unto unity, or more press the necessity of it, or more fiercely judge, oppose, and destroy others for the breach of it which they charge upon them, nor more prevail or advantage themselves by the pretence of it, than do they: but yet notwithstanding all their pretences, it will not be denied, but that the unity which they so make their boast of, and press upon others, is a thing utterly foreign to the gospel, and destructive of that peace, union, and concord among Christians, which it doth require. They know how highly unity is commended in the Scripture, how much it is to be prized and valued by all true believers, how acceptable it is to Jesus Christ, and how severely they are condemned who break it, or despise it: these things they press, and plead, and make their advantage by. But when we come to inquire what it is that they intend by church-unity, they tell us long stories of subjection unto the pope, to the church in its dictates and resolutions without farther examination, merely because they are theirs. Now these things are not only of another nature and kind than the unity and concord commended unto us by Jesus Christ; but perfectly inconsistent with them, and destructive of them. And as they would impose upon us a corrupt confederacy for their own secular advantage, in the room of the spiritual unity of the gospel, so it was necessary that they should find out means suitable unto its accomplishment and preservation; as distant from the means appointed by Christ for the

attaining of gospel union, as their carnal confederacy is from the thing itself. And they have done accordingly: for the enforcing men by all ways of deceit and outward violence unto a compliance with, and submission unto, their orders, is the great expedient for the establishment and preservation of their perverse union, that they have fixed on. Now that this fictitious unity and corrupt carnal pursuit of it, have been the greatest occasion and causes of begetting, fomenting, and continuing the divisions that are among Christians in the world, hath been undeniably proved by learned men of all sorts. And so it will fall out, wherever any reject the union of Christ's institutions, and substitute in the room thereof an agreement of their own invention; as his will be utterly lost, so they will not be able to retain their own.

Thus others also, not content with those bounds and measures which the gospel hath fixed unto the unity of Christians and churches, will have it to consist almost wholly in an outward conformity unto certain rites, orders, ceremonies, and modes of sacred administrations, which themselves have either invented and found out, or do observe and approve. Whoever dissents from them in these things, must immediately be branded as a schismatic, a divider of the church's unity, and an enemy unto the peace and order of it. Howbeit, of conformity unto such institutions and orders of men, of uniformity in the observation of such external rites in the worship of the church, there is not one word spoken, nor any thing of that nature intimated, in all the commands of unity which are given unto us, nor in the directions that are sanctified unto the due preservation of it. Yet such a uniformity being set up in the room of evangelical unity and order, means suited unto the preservation of it, but really destructive of that whose name it beareth, and whose place it possesseth, have not been wanting. And it is not unworthy consideration, how men endeavour to deceive others, and are deceived themselves, by manifold equivocations in their arguings about this matter. For, first, they lay down the necessity of unity among Christians, with the evil that is in breaches, divisions and schisms; which they prove from the commands of the one, and the reproofs of the other, that abound in the Scripture. Then, with an easy deduction, they prove that it is a duty

incumbent on all Christians in their several capacities to observe, keep, further, and promote this unity, and to prevent, oppose, resist, and avoid all divisions that are contrary thereunto. If so, the magistrate must do the same in his place and capacity. Now seeing it is his office, and unto him of God it is committed, to exercise his power in laws and penalties for the promoting of what is good, and the punishing of what is contrary thereunto, it is his duty to coerce, restrain, and punish all those who oppose, despise, or any way break or disturb the unity of the church. And this ratiocination would seem reasonable, were it not doubly defective. For first, the unity intended in the first proposition, whose necessity is confirmed by Scripture testimonies, is utterly lost before we come to the conclusion, and the outward uniformity mentioned is substituted in the room thereof. And hereby, in the second place, are they deceived to believe that external force and penalties are a means to be used by any for the attaining or preserving of gospel unity. It is not improbable, indeed, but that it may be suited to give countenance unto that external uniformity which is intended; but that it should be so unto the promotion of gospel union among believers, is a weak imagination. Let such persons keep themselves and their argument unto that union which the Scripture commends amongst the disciples of Christ and his churches, with the means fitted and appointed unto the preservation of it, and they shall have our compliance with any conclusion that will thence ensue.

Herein, therefore, lies the fundamental cause of our divisions, which will not be healed until it be removed and taken out of the way. Leave believers or professors of the gospel unto their duty in seeking after evangelical unity in the use of other means instituted and blessed unto that end; impose nothing on their consciences or practice under that name, which indeed belongs not thereunto; and although upon the reasons and causes afterward to be mentioned, there may for a season remain some divisions among them, yet there will be a way of healing continually ready for them, and agreed upon by them as such. Where, indeed, men propose unto themselves different ends, though under the same name, the use of the same means for the compassing of them will but increase their variance: as where

some aim at evangelical union, and others at an external uniformity, both under the name of unity and peace, in the use of the same means for these ends, they will be more divided among themselves. But where the same end is aimed at, even the debate of the means for the attaining of it, will insensibly bring the parties into a coalition, and work out in the issue a complete reconciliation. In the mean time, were Christians duly instructed how many lesser differences in mind, and judgment, and practice, are really consistent with the nature, ends, and genuine fruit of the unity that Christ requires among them, it would undoubtedly prevail with them so to manage themselves in their differences by mutual forbearance and condescension in love, as not to contract the guilt of being disturbers or breakers of it. For suppose the minds of any of them to be invincibly prepossessed with the principles wherein they differ from others; yet all who are sincere in their profession, cannot but rejoice to be directed unto such a managery of them, as to be preserved from the guilt of dissolving the unity appointed by Christ to be observed. And to speak plainly, among all the churches in the world which are free from idolatry and persecution, it is not different opinions, or a difference in judgment about revealed truths, nor a different practice in sacred administrations; but pride, self-interest, love of honour, reputation, and dominion, with the influence of civil or political intrigues and considerations, that are the true cause of that defect of evangelical unity that is at this day amongst them. For set them aside, and the real differences which would remain, may be so managed in love, gentleness, and meekness, as not to interfere with that unity which Christ requireth them to preserve. Nothing will from thence follow which shall impeach their common interest in one Lord, one faith, one love, one Spirit, and the administration of the same ordinances according to their light and ability. But if we shall cast away this evangelical union among the disciples and churches of Christ, if we shall break up the bounds and limits fixed unto it, and set up in its place a compliance with or an agreement in the commands and appointments of men, making their observations the rule and measure of our ecclesiastical concord, it cannot be but that innumerable and endless divisions will ensue thereon. If we

will not be contented with the union that Christ hath appointed, it is certain that we shall have none in this world. For concerning that which is of men's finding out, there have been and will be contentions and divisions, whilst there are any on the one side who will endeavour its imposition; and on the other, who desire to preserve their consciences entire unto the authority of Christ in his laws and appointments.

There is none who can be such a stranger in our Israel as not to know that these things have been the great occasion and cause of the divisions and contentions that have been among us near a hundred years, and which at this day make our breaches wide like the sea, that they cannot be healed. Let, therefore, those who have power and ability, be instrumental to restore to the minds of men the true notion and knowledge of the unity which the Lord Christ requireth among his churches and disciples; and let them be left unto that liberty which he hath purchased for them, in the pursuit of that unity which he hath prescribed unto them; and let us all labour to stir up those gracious principles of love and peace, which ought to guide us in the use of our liberty, and will enable us to preserve gospel unity, and there will be a greater progress made towards peace, reconciliation, and concord, amongst all sorts of Christians, than the spoiling of the goods or imprisoning the persons of dissenters will ever effect. But it may be such things are required hereunto, as the world is yet scarce able to comply withal. For whilst men do hardly believe that there is an efficacy and power accompanying the institutions of Christ, for the compassing of that whole end which he aimeth at and intendeth; whilst they are unwilling to be brought unto the constant exercise of that spiritual diligence, patience, meekness, condescension, self-denial, renunciation of the world, and conformity thereunto, which are indispensably necessary in church-guides and church-members, according to their measure, unto the attaining and preservation of gospel unity; but do satisfy themselves in the disposal of an ecclesiastical union, into a subordination unto their own secular interests by external force and power; we have very small expectation of success in the way proposed. In the mean time we are herewith satisfied. Take the churches of Christ in

the world that are not infected with idolatry or persecution, and restore their unity unto the terms and conditions left unto them by Christ and his apostles; and if in any thing we are found uncompliant therewithal, we shall without repining bear the reproach of it, and hasten an amendment.

Another cause of the evil effects and consequences mentioned, is the great neglect that hath been in churches, and church-rulers, in the pursuance of the open direct ends of the gospel, both as to the doctrine and discipline of it. This hath been such, and so evident in the world, that it is altogether in vain for any to deny it, or to attempt an excuse of it. And men have no reason to flatter themselves, that whilst they live in an open neglect of their own duty, others will always, according to their wills or desires, attend with diligence unto what they prescribe unto them. If churches or their rulers could excuse or justify their members, in all the evils that may befall them through their miscarriages and maleadministrations, it might justly be expected that they should go along with them, under their conduct, whither ever they should lead them. But if it can never be obliterated out of the minds and consciences of men, that they must every one live by his own faith, and every one give an account of himself unto God, and that every one, notwithstanding the interposition of the help of churches and their rulers, is obliged immediately in his own person, to take care of his whole duty towards God; it cannot be, but that in such cases, they will judge for themselves, and what is meet for them to do. In case therefore that they find the churches whereunto they do relate under the guilt of the neglect mentioned, it is probable that they will provide for themselves and their own fafety. In this state of things it is morally impossible, but that differences and divisions will fall out, which might all of them have been prevented, had there been a due attention unto the work, doctrine, order, and discipline of the gospel, in the churches that were in possession of the care and administration of them. For it is hard for men to believe, that by the will and command of Christ they are inevitably shut up under spiritual disadvantages; seeing it is certain that he

hath ordered all things in the church for their edification. But the consideration of some particular instances, will render this cause of our divisions more evident and manifest.

The first end of preaching the gospel is the conversion of the souls of men unto God, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. This we suppose will not be questioned, or denied. That the work hereof in all churches ought to be attended and pursued with zeal, diligence, labour, and care, all accompanied with constant and fervant prayers for success in and by the ministers and rulers of them, 1 Tim. v. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. is a truth also that will not admit of any controversy among them that believe the gospel. Herein principally do men in office in the church, exercise and manifest their zeal for the glory of God, their compassion towards the souls of men, and acquit themselves faithfully in the trust committed unto them by the 'great Shepherd of the sheep,' Christ Jesus. If now in any assembly, or other societies professing themselves to be churches of Christ, and claiming the right and power of churches towards all persons living within the bounds or limits which they have prescribed unto themselves, this work be either totally neglected, or carelessly and perfunctorily attended unto; if those on whom it is immediately incumbent, do either suppose themselves free from any obligation thereunto, upon the pretence of other engagements; or do so dispose of themselves in their relation unto many charges or employments, as that it is impossible they should duly attend unto it, or are unable and insufficient for it; so that indeed there is not in such churches a due representation of the love, care, and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ towards the souls of men, which he hath ordained the administrations of his gospel to testify; it cannot be, but that great thoughts of heart, and no small disorder of mind, will be occasioned in them who understand aright how much the principal end of constituting churches in this world is neglected among them. And although it is their duty for a season patiently to bear with, and quietly seek the reformation of, this evil in the churches whereunto they do belong; yet when they find themselves excluded, it may be by the very constitution of the church itself, it may be by the iniquity of them that prevail therein, from the performance of any thing that tends

thereunto, it will increase their disquietment. And whereas men do not join themselves, nor are by any other ways joined unto churches, for any civil or secular ends or purposes, but merely for the promotion of God's glory, and the edification of their own souls in faith and gospel obedience; it is altogether vain for any to endeavour a satisfaction of their consciences, that it is sin to withdraw from such churches, wherein these ends are not pursued nor attainable. And yet a confidence hereof is that which hath countenanced sundry church-guides into that neglect of duty, which many complain of, and groan under at this day.

The second end of the dispensation of the gospel in the assemblies of the churches of Christ by the ministers of them, is the edification of them that are converted unto God, and do believe. Herein consists that feeding of his sheep and lambs that the Lord Christ hath committed unto them: and it is mentioned as the principal end for which the ministry was ordained; or for which pastors and teachers are granted unto the church, Eph. iv. 8—12. And the Scripture abounds in the declaration of what skill and knowledge in the mystery of the gospel, what attendance unto the word and prayer, what care, watchfulness, and diligent labour in the word and doctrine, are required unto a due discharge of the ministerial duty. Where it is omitted, or neglected, where it is carelessly attended unto, where those on whom it is incumbent, do act more like hirelings than true shepherds, where they want skill to divide the word aright, or wisdom and knowledge to declare from it 'the whole counsel of God,' or diligence to be urgent continually in the application of it; there the principal end of all church-communion is ruined and utterly lost. And where it so falls out, let any man judge what thoughts they are like to be exercised withal, who make conscience of the performance of their own duty, and understand the necessity of enjoying the means that Christ hath appointed for their edification. And it is certain, that such churches will in vain, or at least unjustly, expect that professors of the gospel should abide in their particular communion, when they cannot or do not provide food for their souls, whereby they may live to God. Unless all the members of such churches are equally asleep in security, divisions among

them will in this case ensue. Will any disciple of Christ esteem himself obliged to starve his own soul, for the sake of communion with them who have sinfully destroyed the principal end of all church-communion? Is there any law of Christ, or any rule of the gospel, or any duty of love, that require them so to do? The sole immediate end of men's joining in churches being their own edification, and usefulness unto others, can they be bound in conscience always to abide there, or in the communion of those churches, where it is not to be attained, where the means of it are utterly cast aside? This may become such as know not their duty, nor care to be instructed in it, and are willing to perish in and for the company of others. But for them which in such cases shall provide according to the rules of the gospel for themselves, and their own safety, they may be censured, judged, and severely treated by them whose interest and advantage it is so to do; they may be despised by riotous persons who sport themselves with their own deceivings; but with the Lord Christ, the Judge of all, they will be accepted. And they do but increase the dread of their own account, who under pretence of church-power and order, would forcibly shut up Christians in such a condition, as wherein they are kept short of all the true ends of the institution of churches. To suppose, therefore, that every voluntary departure from the constant communion of such churches, made with a design of joining unto those, where the word is dispensed with more diligence and efficacy, is a schism from the church of Christ, is to suppose that which neither the Scripture nor reason will give the least countenance unto. And it would better become such churches to return industriously unto a faithful discharge of their duty, whereby this occasion of divisions may be removed out of the way, than to attempt their own justification by the severe prosecution of such as depart from them.

Thirdly, In pursuit of the doctrine of the gospel so improved and applied, it is the known and open duty of churches in their guides or ministers, by all means to countenance and promote the growth of light, knowledge, godliness, strictness, and fruitfulness of conversation, in those members of them, in whom they may be found, or do appear in an especial manner. Such are they to own, encourage, and make

their companions, and endeavour that others may become like unto them. For unless men in their ordinary and common conversation, in their affections, and the interest which they have in the administration of discipline, do uniformly answer the doctrine of truth which they preach, it cannot be avoided but that it will be matter of offence unto others, and of reproach to themselves. Much more will it be so, if instead of these things, those who preside in the churches shall beat their fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken. But by all ways it is their duty to separate the precious from the vile, if they intend to be as the mouth of the Lord, even in their judgments, affections, and conversations. And herein what wisdom, patience, diligence, love, condescension, and forbearance are required, they alone know, and they full well know, who for any season have in their places conscientiously endeavoured the discharge of their duty. But whatever be the labour which is to be undergone therein, and the trouble wherewith it is attended, it is that which by the appointment of Christ all ministers of the gospel are obliged to attend unto. They are not by contrary actings to make sad the hearts of them whom God would not have made sad, nor to strengthen the hands of them whom God would not have encouraged, as they will answer it at their peril. The hearts of church-guides, and of those who in an especial manner fear God, thriving in knowledge and grace under the dispensation of the word, ought to be knit together in all holy affections, that they may together grow up into him who is the head. For where there is the greatest evidence and manifestation of the power and presence of Christ in any, there ought their affections to be most intense. For as such persons are the crown, the joy and rejoicing of their guides, and will appear to be so in the day of the Lord ; so they do know, or may easily do so, what obligations are on them to honour and pay all due respects unto their teachers, how much on all accounts they owe unto them, whereby their mutual love may be confirmed. And where there is this uniformity between the doctrine of the gospel as preached, and the duties of it as practised, then are they both beautiful in the eyes of all believers, and effectual unto their proper ends. But where things in churches, through their negligence or corruption, or that of their guides, are quite

otherwise, it is easy to conjecture what will ensue thereon. If those who are forwardest in profession, who give the greatest evidence that they have received the powers of that religion which is taught and owned among them, who have apparently attained a growth in spiritual light and knowledge above others, shall be so far from being peculiarly cherished and regarded, from being loved, liked, or associated withal, as that on the other side they shall be marked, observed, reproached, and it may be on every slight provocation put even to outward trouble; whilst men of worldly and profane conversations, ignorant, perhaps riotous and debauched, shall be the delight and companions of church-guides and rulers, it cannot be that such churches should long continue in peace; nor is that peace wherein they continue much to be valued. An agreement in such ways and practices is rather to be esteemed a conspiracy against Christ and holiness, than church-order or concord. And when men once find themselves hated, and it may be persecuted, for no other cause, as they believe, but because they labour in their lives and professions to express the power of that truth wherein they have been instructed, they can hardly avoid the entertainment of severe thoughts concerning them from whom they had just reason to expect other usage; and also to provide for their own more peaceable encouragement and edification.

Fourthly, Hereunto also belongeth the due exercise of gospel discipline, according to the mind of Christ. It is indeed by some called into question, whether there be any rule or discipline appointed by Christ to be exercised in his churches. But this doubt must respect such outward forms and modes of the administration of these things, which are supposed, but not proved necessary. For whether the Lord Christ hath appointed some to rule, and some to be ruled; whether he hath prescribed laws or rules, whereby the one should govern and the other obey; whether he hath determined the matter, manner, and end of this rule and government, cannot well be called into controversy by such as profess to believe the gospel. Of what nature or kind these governors or rulers are to be, what is their office, how they are to be invested therewith, and by what authority, how they are to behave themselves in the administration of the

laws of the church, are things determined by him in the word. And for the matters about which they are to be conversant, it is evidently declared of what nature they are, how they are to be managed, and to what end. The qualifications and duties of those who are to be admitted into the church, their deportment in it, their removal from it, are all expressed in the laws and directions given unto the same end. In particular it is ordained, that those who are unruly or disorderly, who walk contrary unto the rules and ways of holiness prescribed unto the church, shall be rebuked, admonished, instructed; and, if after all means used for their amendment, they abide in impenitency, that they be ejected out of communion. For the church, as visible, is a society gathered and erected to express and declare the holiness of Christ, and the power of his grace in his person and doctrine. And where this is not done, no church is of any advantage unto the interests of his glory in this world. The preservation therefore of holiness in them, whereof the discipline mentioned is an effectual means, is as necessary and of the same importance with the preservation of their being. The Lord Christ hath also expressly ordained, that in case offences should arise in and among his churches, that in and by them they should be composed, according to the rules of the word and his own laws; and in particular, that in sinful miscarriages causing offence or scandal, there be a regular proceeding, according unto an especial law and constitution of his, for the removal of the offence and recovery of the offender; as also that those who in other cases have fallen by the power of temptation, should be restored by a spirit of meekness; and, not to instance in more particulars, that the whole flock be continually watched over, exhorted, warned, instructed, comforted, as the necessities or occasions of the whole, or the several members of it, do require. Now supposing these and the like laws, rules, and directions, to be given and enjoined by the authority of Christ (which gives warranty for their execution unto men prudent for the ordering of affairs according to their necessary circumstances, and believers of the gospel, doing all things in obedience unto him), we judge that a complete rule or government is erected thereby in the church. However, we know that the exercise of discipline in every church, so far as the laws and

rules of it are expressed in the Scripture, and the ends of it directed unto, is as necessary as any duty enjoined unto us in the whole course of our gospel obedience. And where this is neglected, it is in vain for any churches to expect peace and unity in their communion, seeing itself neglecteth the principal means of them. It is pleaded, that the mixture of those that are wicked and ungodly in the sacred administrations of the church, doth neither defile the administrations themselves, nor render them unuseful unto those who are rightly interested in them, and duly prepared for the participation of them. Hence that no church ought to be forsaken, nor its communion withdrawn from merely on that account, many of old and of late have pleaded. Nor do we say, that this solely of itself is sufficient to justify a separation from any church. But when a church shall tolerate in its communion, not only evil men, but their evils, and absolutely refuse to use the discipline of Christ for the reformation of the one, and the taking away of the other, there is great danger lest the 'whole lump be leavened,' and the edification of particular persons be obstructed, beyond what the Lord Christ requires of them to submit unto and to acquiesce in.

Neither will things have any better success where the discipline degenerates into an outward forcible jurisdiction and power. The things of Christ are to be administered with the spirit of Christ. Such a frame of heart and mind as was in him, is required of all that act under him and in his name. Wherefore charity, pity, compassion, condescension, meekness, and forbearance, with those other graces, which were so glorious and conspicuous in him, and in all that he did, are to bear sway in the minds of them who exercise this care and duty for him in the church. To set up such a form of the administration of discipline, or to commit the exercise of it unto such persons, as whereby, or by whom, the Lord Christ in his rule of the church, would be represented as furious, captious, proud, covetous, oppressive, is not the way to honour him in the world, nor to preserve the peace of the churches. And indeed some, while they boast of the imitation of Christ and his example, in opposition to his grace, do in their lives and practices make unto the world a representation of the devil. But an account of this degeneracy

is given so distinctly by Peitro Suave, the author of the History of the Council of Trent, lib. 4. ad Ann. 1551. that we think it not unmeet to express it in his own words. He saith, therefore, that, 'Christ having commanded his apostles to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, he left also unto them, in the person of all the faithful, this principal precept, to love one another, charging them to make peace between those that dissented, and for the last remedy giving the care thereof to the body of the church; promising it should be bound and loosed in heaven, whatever they did bind and loose on earth; and that whatever they did ask with a common consent, should be granted by the Father. In this charitable office, to give satisfaction to the offended, and pardon to the offender, the primitive church was always exercised. And in conformity to this, St. Paul ordained, that brethren having civil suits one against another, should not go to the tribunals of infidels; but that wise men should be appointed to judge the differences; and this was a kind of civil judgment, as the other had the similitude of a criminal; but were both so different from the judgments of the world, that as these are executed by the power of the judge who enforceth submission, so those only by the will of the guilty to receive them; who refusing of them, the ecclesiastical judge remaineth without execution, and hath no power but to foreshew the judgment of God, which according to his omnipotent good pleasure will follow in this life or the next. And indeed the ecclesiastical judgment did deserve the name of charity, in regard that it did only induce the guilty to submit, and the church to judge with such sincerity, that neither in the one any bad effect could have place, nor just complaint in the other; and the excess of charity in correcting, did make the corrector to feel greater pain than the corrected; so that in the church no punishment was imposed, without lamentation in the multitude, and greater of the better sort. And this was the cause why to correct was called to lament. So St. Paul, rebuking of the Corinthians, for not chastising the incestuous, said, 'You have not lamented to separate such a transgressor from you.' And in another epistle, 'I fear that when I come unto you, I shall not find you such as I desire, but in contentions and tumults, and that at my coming I shall lament many of those

who have sinned before.' The judgment of the church (as it is necessary in every multitude) was fit that it should be conducted by one, who should preside and guide the action, propose the matters, and collect the points to be consulted on. This care, due to the most principal and worthy person, was always committed to the bishop: and when the churches were many, the propositions and deliberations were made by the bishop, first in the college of the priests and deacons, which they called the presbytery, and there were ripened, to receive afterward the last resolution in the general congregation of the church. This form was still on foot in the year 250, and is plainly seen by the epistles of Cyprian, who in the matter concerning those who did eat of meats offered to idols, and subscribe to the religion of the Gentiles, writeth to the presbytery, that he doth not think to do any thing without their counsel, and consent of the people, and writeth to the people, that at his return he will examine the causes and merits thereof in their presence, and under their judgment; and he wrote to those priests, who of their own brain had reconciled some, that they should give an account to the people.

'The goodness and charity of the bishops made their opinion for the most part to be followed, and by little and little, was cause that the church, charity waxing cold, not regarding the charge laid upon them by Christ, did lean the ear to the bishop; and ambition, a witty passion, which doth insinuate itself in the show of virtue, did cause it to be readily embraced. But the principal cause of the change was the ceasing of the persecutions: for then the bishops did erect, as it were a tribunal, which was much frequented; because as temporal commodities, so suits did increase. This judgment, though it were not as the former in regard of the form, to determine all by the opinion of the church, yet it was of the same sincerity. Whereupon Constantine, seeing how profitable it was to determine causes, and that by the authority of religion, captious actions were discovered which the judges could not penetrate, made a law that there should be no appeal from the sentences of bishops, which should be executed by the secular judge. And if, in a cause depending before a secular tribunal, in any state thereof, either of the parties, though the other contradict,

shall demand the episcopal judgment, the cause shall be immediately remitted to him. Here the tribunal of the bishop began to be a common pleading-place, having execution by the ministry of the magistrate, and to gain the name of episcopal jurisdiction, episcopal audience, and such-like. The emperor Valence did enlarge it; who, in the year 365, gave the bishop the care over all the prizes of vendible things: this judicial negociation pleased not the good bishops. Possidonius doth recount, that Austin being employed herein, sometimes until dinner-time, sometimes longer, was wont to say, that it was a trouble, and did divert him from doing things proper unto him: and himself writeth, that it was to leave things profitable and to attend things tumultuous and perplexed. And St. Paul did not take it unto himself, as being not fit for a preacher; but would have it given to others. Afterward some bishops beginning to abuse the authority given them by the law of Constantine, that was seventy years after revoked by Ascadius and Honorius, and an ordinance made, that they should judge causes of religion, and not civil, except both parties did consent, and declared that they should not be thought to have a court: which law being not much observed in Rome, in regard of the great power of the bishops, Valentinian being in the city in the year 452 did renew it, and made it to be put in execution. But a little after, some part of the power taken away was restored by the princes that followed; so that Justinian did establish unto them a court and audience, and assigned unto them the causes of religion, the ecclesiastical faults of the clergy, and divers voluntary jurisdictions also over the laity. By these degrees the charitable correction of Christ did degenerate into domination, and made Christians lose their ancient reverence and obedience. It is denied in words, that ecclesiastical jurisdiction is dominion, as is the secular; yet one knoweth not how to put a difference between them. But St. Paul did put it when he wrote to Timothy, and repeated it to Titus, that a bishop should not be greedy of gain, nor a striker. Now on the contrary, they made men pay for processes, and imprison the parties, as is done in the secular court,' &c.

This degeneracy of discipline was long since esteemed burdensome, and looked on as the cause of innumerable

troubles and grievances unto all sorts of people: yea, it hath had no better esteem among them who had little or no acquaintance with what is taught concerning these things in the Scripture: only they found an inconsistency in it with those laws and privileges of their several countries whereby their civil liberties and advantages were confirmed unto them. And if at any time it take place or prevail amongst persons of more light and knowledge, who are able to compare it, or the practice of it, with the institutions of Christ in the gospel, and the manner of the administration therein also directed, it greatly alienates the minds of men from the communion of such churches. Especially it doth so, if set up unto an exclusion of that benign, kind, spiritual, and every way useful discipline, that Christ hath appointed to be exercised in his church. When corruptions and abuses were come to the height in the papacy in this matter, we know what ensued thereon. Divines, indeed, and sundry other persons learned and godly, did principally insist on the errors and heresies which prevailed in the church of Rome, with the defilements and abominations of their worship. But that which alienated the minds of princes, magistrates, and whole nations from them, was the ecclesiastical domination which they had craftily erected and cunningly managed unto the ends of their own ambition, power, and avarice, under the name of church-rule and discipline. And wherever any thing of the same kind is continued, that a rule under the same pretence is erected and exercised in any church after the nature of secular courts, by force and power, put forth in legal citations, penalties, pecuniary mulcts, without an open evidence of men being acted in what they do herein, by love, charity, compassion towards the souls of men, zeal for the glory of God and honour of Christ, with a design for the purity, holiness, and reformation of the members of it, that church may not expect unity and peace any longer than the terror of its proceedings doth overbalance other thoughts and desires proceeding from a sense of duty in all that belong unto it. Yea, whatever is, or is to be the manner of the administration of discipline in the church, about which there may be doubtful disputations, which men of an ordinary capacity may not be able clearly to determine; yet, if the avowed end of it be not the purity and holiness of the

church, and if the effects of it in a tendency unto that end be not manifest, it is hard to find out whence our obligation to a compliance with it should arise. And where an outward conformity unto some church-order is aimed at alone, in the room of all other things, it will quickly prove itself to be nothing, or of no value in the sight of Christ. And these things do alienate the minds of many from an acquiescence in their stations or relations to such churches. For the principal enforcements of men's obedience and reverence unto the rulers of the church, is because they 'watch diligently for the good of their souls, as those that must give an account.'[q] And if they see such set over them as give no evidence of any such watchful care acting itself according to those Scripture directions which are continually read unto them, but rather rule them with force and rigour, seeking theirs, not them, they grow weary of the yoke, and sometimes regularly, sometimes irregularly, contrive their own freedom and deliverance.

It may not here be amiss to inquire into the reasons and occasions that have seduced churches and their rulers into the miscarriages insisted on. Now these are chiefly some principles with their application that they have trusted unto; but which indeed have really deceived them, and will yet continue so to do. And the first of these is, that whereas they are true churches, and thereon intrusted with all church-power and privileges, they need not farther concern themselves to seek for grounds or warranty to keep up all their members unto their communion. For be they otherwise what they will, so long as they are true churches, it is their duty to abide in their peace and order. If any call their church-state into question, they take no consideration of them, but how they may be punished; it may be destroyed, as perverse schismatics. And they are ready to suppose that upon an acknowledgment that they are true churches, every dissent from them in any thing must needs be criminal: as if it were all one to be a true church, and to be in the truth and right in all things; a supposition whereof includes a nullity in the state of those churches which in the least differ from them; than which there is no more uncharitable nor schismatical principle in the world: but in the

[q] Heb. xiii. 27.

common definition of schism, that it is a causeless separation from a true church, that term of causeless is very little considered or weighed by them whose interest it is to lay the charge of it on others. And hence it is come to pass, that wherever there have been complaints of faults, miscarriages, errors, defections of churches in late ages, their counsels have only been how to destroy the complainers, not in the least how they should reform themselves; as though in church affairs, truth, right, and equity were entailed on power and possession. How the complaints concerning the church of Rome, quickened by the outcries of so many provinces of Europe, and evidence in matter of fact were eluded and frustrated in the council of Trent, leaving all things to be tried out by interest and force, is full well known. For they know that no reformation can be attempted and accomplished, but it will be a business of great labour, care, and trouble, things not delightful unto the minds of men at ease. Besides, as it may possibly ruffle or discompose some of the chiefs in their present ways or enjoyments; so it will, as they fear, tend to their disreputation, as though they had formerly been out of the way, or neglective of their duty: and this, as they suppose, would draw after it another inconvenience, by reflecting on them and their practices, as the occasions of former disorders and divisions. They choose, therefore, generally to flatter themselves under the name and authority of the church, and lay up their defence and security against an humble painful reformation, in a plea that they need it not. So was it with the church of Laodicea of old, who in the height of her decaying condition, flattered herself, 'that she was rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing; and knew not,' or would not acknowledge, 'that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'[r] Now it cannot but seem exceeding strange unto men who wisely consider these things, that whereas the churches which were planted and watered by the apostles themselves, and enjoyed for some good season the presence and advantage of their infallible guidance to preserve them in their original purity and order, did within a few years, many of them, so degenerate, and stand in need of reformation, that

[r] Rev. iii. 17.

our Lord Jesus Christ threatened from heaven to cast them off and destroy them, unless they did speedily reform themselves according to his mind; that those now in the world, ordered at first by persons fallible, and who in many things were actually deceived, should so continue in their purity and holiness from age to age, as to stand in need of no reformation or amendment. Well will it be, if it prove so at the great day of visitation. In the mean time it becomes the guides of all the churches in the world, to take care that there do not such decays of truth, holiness, and purity in worship, fall out under their hand in the churches wherein they preside, as that for them they should be rejected by our Lord Jesus Christ, as he threatens to deal with those who are guilty of such defections. For the state of the generality of churches is such at this day in the world, as he who thinks them not to stand in need of any reformation, may justly be looked on as a part of their sinful degeneracy. We are not ignorant what is usually pleaded in bar unto all endeavours after church-reformation: for, they say, if upon the clamours of a few humorous, discontented persons, whom nothing will please, and who, perhaps, are not agreed among themselves, a reformation must instantly be made or attempted, there will be nothing stable, firm, or sacred left in the church. Things once well established are not to be called into question upon every one's exceptions. And these things are vehemently pleaded, and urged to the exclusion of all thoughts of changing any thing, though evidently for the better. But long-continued complaints, and petitions of multitudes, whose sincerity hath received as great an attestation as human nature, or Christian religion can give, it may be deserve not to be so despised: however the jealousy which churches and their rulers ought to have over themselves, their state and condition, and the presence of the glory of Christ among them, or its departure from them, especially considering the fearful example of the defection and apostacy of many churches, which is continually before their eyes, seems to require a readiness in them on every intimation or remembrance, to search into their state and condition, and to redress what they find amiss: for suppose they should be in the right, and blameless as to those orders and constitutions wherein others dissent from them, yet

there may be such defects and declensions in doctrine, holiness, and the fruits of them in the world, as the most strict observation of outward order, will neither countenance, nor compensate: for to think to preserve a church by outward order, when its internal principles of faith and holiness are decayed, is but to do like him, who, endeavouring to set a dead body upright, but failing in his attempt, concluded, that there was somewhat wanting within.

Another principle of the same importance, and applied unto the same purpose, is, That the people are neither able nor fit to judge for themselves; but ought, in all things, to give themselves up unto the conduct of their guides, and to rest satisfied in what they purpose and prescribe unto them. The imbibing of this apprehension, which is exceedingly well suited to be made a covering to the pride and ignorance of those unto whose interests it is accommodated, makes them impatient of hearing any thing concerning the liberty of Christians in common, to judge of what is their duty, what they are to do, and what they are not to do, in things sacred and religious. Only it is acknowledged there is so much ingenuity in the management of this principle, and its application, that it is seldom extended by any beyond their own concernments: for whereas the church of Rome hath no way to maintain itself in its doctrine and essential parts of its constitution, but by an implicit faith and obedience in its subjects: seeing the animating principles of its profession, will endure no kind of impartial test or trial, they extend it unto all things, as well in matters of faith, as of worship and discipline. But those who are secure that the faith which they profess will endure an examination by the Scripture, as being founded therein, and thence educed, they will allow unto the people, at least a judgment of discerning truth from falsehood, to be exercised about the doctrines which they teach: but as for the things which concern the worship of God, and rule of the church, wherein they have an especial interest and concern, there they betake themselves for relief unto this principle. Now as there is more honesty and safety in this latter way than in the former; so it cannot be denied but that there is less of ingenuity and self-consistency: for if you will allow the people to make a judgment in and about any thing that is sacred

or religious, you will never know how to hit a joint aright to make a separation among such things; so as to say with any pretence of reason, about these things they may judge for themselves, but not about those. And it is a little too open to say, that they may exercise a judgment about what God hath appointed, but none about what we appoint ourselves. But without offence be it spoken, this apprehension, in its whole latitude, and under its restrictions, is so weak and ridiculous, that it must be thought to proceed from an excess of prejudice, if any man of learning should undertake to patronize it. Those who speak in these things out of custom and interest, without a due examination of the grounds and reasons of what they affirm or deny, as many do, are of no consideration: and it is not amiss for them to keep their distance, and stand upon their guard, lest many of those whom they exclude from judging for themselves, should be found more competent judges in those matters than themselves. And let churches and church-rulers do what they please, every man at last will be determined in what is meet for him to do, by his own reason and judgment. Churches may inform the minds of men, they cannot enforce them. And if those that adhere unto any church do not do so, because they judge that it is their duty, and best for them so to do, they therein differ not much from a herd of creatures, that are called by another name. And yet a secret apprehension in some, that the disposal of the concernments of the worship of God, is so left and confined unto themselves, as that nothing is left unto the people but the glory of obedience, without any sedulous inquiry after what is their own duty, with respect unto that account which every one must give of himself unto God, doth greatly influence them into the neglects insisted on. And when any of the people come to know their own liberty and duty in these things, as they cannot but know it, if at all they apply their minds unto the consideration of them, they are ready to be alienated from those who will neither permit them to judge for themselves, nor are able to answer for them, if they should be misled. 'For if the blind lead the blind,' as well he that is led, as he that leads, 'will fall into the ditch.'

Add hereunto the thoughts of some, that secular gran-

deur, and outward pomp, with a distance and reservedness from the conversation of ordinary men, are necessary in ecclesiastics, to raise and preserve that popular veneration, which they suppose to be their due. Without this it is thought government will not be carried on, nor the minds of men awed unto obedience. Certain it is that this was not the judgment of the apostles of old, nor of the bishops or pastors of the primitive churches. It is certain also, that no direction is given for it, in any of the sacred or ancient ecclesiastical writings. And yet they all of them abound with instructions how the guides of the church should preserve that respect which is their due. The sum of what they teach us to this purpose is, that in humility, patience, self-denial, readiness to take up the cross, in labours, kindness, compassion, and zeal in the exercise of all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, they should excel and go before the flock as their example.[r] This way of procuring veneration unto church-guides by worldly state, greatness, seeming domination or power, was, as far as we can find, an utter stranger unto the primitive times: yea, not only so, but it seems to be expressly prohibited in that direction of our Saviour unto them,[s] for avoiding conformity in these things unto the rulers of the world. But those times they say are past and gone: there remains not that piety and devotion in Christians, as to reverence their pastors for their humility, graces, labours, and gifts. The good things of this world are now given them to be used; and it is but a popular levelling spirit that envies the dignities and exaltation of the clergy. Be it so, therefore, that in any place they are justly and usefully, at least as unto themselves, possessed of dignities and revenues; and far be it from us, or any of us, to envy them their enjoyments, or to endeavour their deprivation of them: but we must crave leave to say, that the use of them to the end mentioned is vain, and wholly frustrate. And if it be so, indeed, that Christians, or professors of the gospel, will not pay the respect and duty which they owe unto their pastors and guides upon the account of their office, with their work and labour therein, it is an open evidence how great a necessity there is for all men to endeavour

[r] 1 Pet. v. 1—3. Acts xx. 18—21. 31. [s] Luke xxii. 24—26.

the reduction of primitive light, truth, holiness, and obedience into churches: for this is that which hath endangered their ruin, and will effect it, if continued; namely, an accommodation of church-order and discipline, with the state and deportment of rulers, unto the decays and irreligion of the people, which should have been corrected and removed by their reformation. But we hope better things of many Christians, whose faith and obedience are rather to be imitated, than the corrupt degeneracy of others to be complied with, or provided for. However, it is evident that this corrupt persuasion hath in most ages, since the days of Paulus Samosatenus, let out and given countenance unto the pride, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory of several ecclesiastics. For how can it be otherwise with them, who being possessed of the secular advantages which some churches have obtained in the world, are otherwise utterly destitute of those qualifications, which the names of the places they possess do require. And yet all this while it will be impossible to give one single instance where that respect and estimation which the Scripture requires in the people towards their spiritual guides, were ingenerated or improved by that worldly grandeur, pomp, and domination, which some pretend to be so useful unto that end and purpose. For that awe which is put thereby on the spirits of the common sort of men; that terror which these things strike into the minds of any who may be obnoxious unto trouble and disadvantage from them; that outward observance which is by some done unto persons vested with them, with the admission which they have thereby into an equality of society with great men in the world, are things quite of another nature. And those who satisfy and please themselves herewith, instead of that regard which is due unto the officers or guides of the churches of Christ, from the people that belong unto them, do but help on their defection from their duty incumbent on them. Neither were it difficult to manifest what innumerable scandalous offences, proceeding from the pride and elation of mind that is found among many, who being perhaps young and ignorant, it may be corrupt in their conversations, having nothing to bear up themselves withal, but an interest in dignities and worldly riches, have been occasioned by this corrupt persuasion. And it is not hard to

judge how much is lost hereby from the true glory and beauty of the church. The people are quietly suffered to decay in that love and respect towards their pastors, which is their grace and duty, whilst they will pay that outward veneration which worldly grandeur doth acquire, and pastors satisfying themselves therewith, grow neglective of that exemplary humility and holiness, of that laborious diligence in the dispensation of the word, and care for the souls of the flock, which should procure them that holy respect which is due unto their office by the appointment of Jesus Christ. But these things are here mentioned only on the occasion of what was before discoursed of.

Another great occasion of schisms and divisions among Christians, ariseth from the remainders of that confusion which was brought upon the churches of Europe, by that general apostacy from gospel truth, purity, and order, wherein they were for sundry ages involved: few churches in the world have yet totally freed themselves from being influenced by the relics of its disorders. That such an apostacy did befall these churches we shall not need to prove. A supposition of it is the foundation of the church-state of England. That things should so fall out among them, was of old foretold by the Holy Ghost.[1] That many churches have received a signal deliverance from the principal evils of that apostacy in the reformation, we all acknowledge: for therein by several ways, and in several degrees of success, a return unto their pristine faith and order was sincerely endeavoured. And so far was there a blessing accompanying of their endeavours, as that they were all of them delivered from things in themselves pernicious and destructive to the souls of men. Nevertheless it cannot be denied, but that there do yet continue among them sundry remainders of those disorders, which under their fatal declension they were cast into. Nor doth there need any farther proof hereof, than the incurable differences and divisions that are found among them: for had they attained their primitive condition, such divisions with all their causes had been prevented. And the Papists, upbraiding Protestants with their intestine differences and schisms, do but reproach them that they have not been able in a hundred years to rectify all

[1] 2 Thess. ii.

those abuses, and remove all those disorders which they were inventing, and did introduce in a thousand. There is one thing only of this nature, or that owes itself unto this original, which we shall instance in, as an occasion of much disorder in the present churches, and of great divisions that ensue thereon. It is known none were admitted unto the fellowship of the church in the days of the apostles, but upon their repentance, faith, and turning unto God. The plain story of their preaching, the success which they had therein, and their proceedings to gather and plant churches thereon, puts this out of the reach of all sober contradiction. None will say that they gathered churches of Jews and Gentiles, that is, while they continued such; nor of open sinners continuing to live in their sins. An evidence, therefore, and confession of conversion to God, was unavoidably necessary to the admission of members in the first churches. Neither will we ever contend with such importune prejudices, as, under any pretences capable of a wrangling countenance shall set up against this evidence. Hence, in the judgment of charity, all the members of those churches were looked on as persons really justified and sanctified, as effectually converted unto God; and as such were they saluted and treated by the apostles: as such, we say, they were looked on and owned; and as such, upon their confession, it was the duty of all men, even the apostles themselves, to look on them and own them; though absolutely in the sight of God, who alone is 'searcher of the hearts of men,' some among them were hypocrites, and some proved apostates. But this profession of conversion unto God by the ministry of the word, and the mutual acknowledgment of each other as so converted unto God in a way of duty, was the foundation of holy spiritual love and unity among them. And although this did not, nor could preserve all the first churches absolutely free from schisms and divisions, yet was it the most sovereign antidote against that infection, and the most effectual means for the reduction of unity, after that by the violent interposition of men's corruptions and temptations, it had been lost for a season. Afterward, in the primitive times, when many more took on them the profession of Christian religion, who had not such eminent and visible conversions unto God, as most of those

had who were changed by the ministry of the apostles, that persons unfit and unqualified for that state and condition of being members of churches, might not be admitted into them, unto the disturbance of their order, and disreputation of their holy conversation; they were for some good season kept in the condition of expectants, and called catechumens, or persons that attended the church for instruction. In this state they were taught the mysteries of religion, and trial was made of their faith, holiness, and constancy, before their admission: and by this means was the preservation of the churches in purity, peace, and order, provided for. Especially were they so in conjunction with that severe discipline which was then exercised towards all the members of them. But after that the multitudes of the Gentile world, in the times of the first Christian emperors, pressed into the church, and were admitted on much easier terms than those before mentioned, whole nations came to claim successively the privilege of church-membership, without any personal duty performed or profession made unto the purpose on their part. And so do they continue to do in many places to this day. Men generally trouble themselves no farther about a title to church-membership and privileges, but rest in the prepossession of their ancestors, and their own nativity in such or such places. For whatever may be owned or acknowledged concerning the necessity of a visible profession of faith and repentance, and that credible as to the sincerity of it in the judgment of charity, it is certain for the most part no such thing is required of any, nor performed by them. And they do but ill consult for the edification of the church, or the good of the souls of men, who would teach them to rest in an outward formal representation of things, instead of the reality of duties and the power of internal grace. And no small part of the present ruin of Christian religion owes itself unto this corrupt principle. For whereas the things of it which consist in powers internal, and effectual operations of grace, have outward representations of them, which from their relation unto what they represent, are called by the same names with them, many take up with and rest in these external things, as though Christianity consisted in them; although they are but a dead carcase, where the quickening life and soul of internal

grace is wanting. Thus it is in this matter where there is a shadow and appearance of church-order, when the truth and substance of it is far away. Men come together unto all the ends of the church-assemblies whereunto they are admitted, but on no other grounds, with no other hearts nor designs, but on and with what they partake in any civil society, or jointly engage in any other worldly concern. And this fundamental error in the constitution of many churches, is the occasion as of other evils, so in particular of divisions among professed Christians. Hence originally was the discipline of the church accommodated by various degrees to the rule and government of such persons as understood little, or were little sensible of the nature, power, and efficacy of that spiritual discipline which is instituted in the gospel, which thereby at last degenerated into the outward way of force and power before described: for the churches began to be composed of such as could no otherwise be ruled. And instead of reducing them to their primitive temper and condition, whereunto the evangelical rule was suited, there was invented a way of government accommodate unto that state whereinto they were lapsed, which those concerned found to be the far easier work of the two. Hence did sincere mutual love with all the fruits of it begin to decay among church-members; seeing they could not have that tolerable persuasion of that truth of profession in each other which is necessary to preserve it without dissimulation, and to provoke it unto a due exercise. Hence did private spiritual communion fail amongst them, the most being strangers unto all the ways and means of it; yea, despising and contemning it in all the instances of its exercise; which will yet be found to be as the life and soul of all useful church-communion. And where the public communion is only attended unto with neglect hereof, it will quickly wither and come to nothing: for on this occasion do all duties of watchfulness, exhortations, and admonitions, proceeding from mutual love and care of each other's condition, so frequently recommended unto us in the Scripture, utterly cease and become disused. Hence members of the same church began to converse together as men only, or as the best civil neighbours; and if at all as Christians, yet not with respect unto that especial relation unto a particular

church,[u] wherein their usefulness as members of the same organical body is required. Hence some persons looking on these things as intolerable, and not only obstructive of their edification, but destructive unto all really useful church-communion, we ought not to wonder if they have thought meet to provide otherwise for themselves. Not that we approve of every departure or withdrawing from the communion of churches, where things continue under such disorders, but only shew what it is that occasioneth many so to do. For as there may sometimes be just cause hereof, and persons in so doing may manage what they do according unto Scripture rule; so we doubt not but that some may rashly and precipitately, without due attendance unto all the duties which in such undertakings are required of them, without that charity and forbearance which no circumstances can absolve them from, make themselves guilty of a blameable separation. And these are some of those things which we look upon as the general causes or occasions of all the schisms and divisions that are at this day found among professors of the gospel. Whether the guilt of them will not much cleave unto them by whom they are kept on foot and maintained, is worth their inquiry; for so doth it befall our human nature, apt to be deceived and imposed on by various pretences and prejudices, that those are oftentimes highly guilty themselves of those miscarriages, whose chiefest satisfaction and glory consist in charging them on others. However, if these things do not absolutely justify any in a secession from the churches whereunto they did relate; yet they render the matter so highly questionable, and the things themselves are so burdensome upon the minds of many, as that divisions will thereon undoubtedly ensue. And when it is so fallen out, to design and contrive the reduction of all unto outward unity and concord, by forcing them, who on such occasions have dissented and withdrawn themselves from the communion of any church, without endeavouring the removal of these occasions of their so doing, and the reformation of those abuses which have given cause thereunto, is severe, if not unjust. But when the Lord Jesus Christ in his care towards his churches, and a watchfulness over them, shall be

[u] 1 Cor. xii. 14—20.

pleased to remove these and the like stumbling-blocks out of the way, there will, we hope, be a full return unto gospel unity and peace among them that serve and worship him on the earth.

In this state of things, wherever it be found, it is no wonder if the wickedness, ignorance, prejudices, and temptations of men do interpose themselves unto the increase and heightening of those divisions, whose springs and occasions lie elsewhere. When none of these provocations were given them, yet we know there was enough in professors themselves to bring forth the bitter fruit of differences and schisms,[x] even in the days of the apostles. How much more may we fear the like fruits and effects from the like principles and corrupt affections? Now the occasions of drawing them forth are more, temptations unto them greater, directions against them less evident and powerful, and all sense of ecclesiastical authority, through its abuse and male-administration, is, if not lost and ruined, yet much weakened and impaired. But from the darkness of the minds of men, and their unmortified affections (as the best know but in part, nor are they perfectly sanctified) it is, that they are apt to take offence one at another, and thereon to judge and censure each other temerariously; and which is worst of all, every one to make his own understanding and persuasion thereon, the rule of truth and worship unto others. All such ways and courses are against us in the matter of love and union, all tending to make and increase divisions among us. And the evil that is in them, we might here declare, but that it falls frequently under the chastisement of other hands: neither indeed can it well meet with too much severity of reproof. Only it were desirable that those by whom such reproofs are managed, would take care not to give advantages of retortion or self-justification unto them that are reproved by them: but this they do unavoidably, whilst they seem to make their own judgments and practices the sole rule and measure of what they approve or disallow. In what complies with them there is nothing perverse, and in what differs from them there is nothing sincere. And on this foundation, whilst they reprove censuring, rash-judging, and reproaching of others, with pride,

[x] 1 Cor. i. 11. iii. 3.

self-conceitedness, false opinions, irregular practices in church worship, or any other concerns of religion, backbiting, easiness in taking up false reports, with the like evils, as they deserve severely to be rebuked, those reproved by them are apt to think, that they see the guilt of many of the crimes charged on themselves, in them by whom they are reproved. So on all hands things gender unto farther strife; whilst every party being conscious unto their own sincerity, according unto the rule of their present light, which is the only measure they can take of it, are ready to impeach the sincerity of them by whom they suppose themselves causelessly traduced and condemned. This evil therefore is to be diligently watched against by all that love unity, truth, holiness, or peace. And seeing there are rules and precepts given us in the Scriptures to this purpose, it may not be unmeet to call over some of them. One rule of this nature and import is, that we should all of us 'study to be quiet, and to do our own business,'[y] in things civil and sacred. Who will harm men, who will be offended with them, whilst they are no otherwise busied in the world? And if any attempt to do them evil, what need have they to be troubled thereat? Duty and innocency will give peace to a worthy soul in the midst of all storms, and whatever may befall it. Now will any one deny, or can they, but that it is the duty, and ought to be the business, of every man to seek his own edification, and the saving of his soul? Deny this unto any man, and you put yourself in the place of God to him, and make him more miserable than a beast. And this, which no man can forbid, no man can otherwise do, than according to that light and knowledge of the will of God which he hath received: if this therefore be so attended to, as that we do not thereby break in upon the concerns of others, nor disturb them in what is theirs, but be carried on quietly and peaceably with an evidence in what we do, that it is merely our own personal duty, that we are in the pursuance of; all cause of offence will be taken away. For if any will yet be offended with men, because they peaceably seek the salvation of their own souls, or do that in order thereunto, which they cannot but do, unless they will cast off all sense of God's authority over them, it is to

[y] 1 Thess. iv. 11.

seek occasions of offence against them, where none are given. But when any persons are acted by a pragmatical curiosity to interpose themselves in the ways, affairs, and concerns of other men, beyond what the laws of love, usefulness, and mutual Christian aid do require, tumults, disorders, vexations, strife, emulations, with a world of evils, will ensue thereon; especially will they do so, when men are prone to dwell on the real or supposed faults of others, which on various pretences of pity for their persons, or a detestation of their evils, or public reproof of them, they will aggravate, and so on all occasions expose them to public censure, perhaps, as they think, out of zeal to God's glory, and a desire for the church's good: for the passions and interests of such persons, are ready to swell over the bounds of modesty, sobriety, and peace, though through the blindness which all self-love is accompanied withal, they seldom see clearly what they do. Would we therefore labour to see a beauty, desirableness, and honour in the greatest confinement of our thoughts, words, and actions, unto ourselves and our own occasions, that express duty will admit of, it might tend very much to the preservation of love and peace among professors, for unto this end it is prescribed unto us.

Secondly, It is strictly commanded us that we should 'not judge, that we be not judged.'[z] There is no rule for mutual conversation and communion, in the Scripture, that is oftener repeated, or more earnestly inculcated:[a] nor is there any of more use, nor whose grounds and reasons are more evident or more cogent.[b] Judging and determining in ourselves, or divulging censures concerning others, their persons, states, and conditions towards God, their principles as to truth and sincerity, their ways as to righteousness and holiness, whether past or present, any otherwise than by the 'perfect law of liberty,'[c] and that only when we are called thereunto in a way of duty, is the poison of common love and peace, and the ruin of all communion and society, be it of what nature it will. For us to judge and determine whether these or those churches are true churches or no, whether such persons are godly or no, whether such of their principles and actions are regular or no, and so condemn them

[z] Matt. vii. 1, 2. [a] Luke vi. 37. [b] Rom. xiv. 3, 4. 10. [c] James iv. 12.

in our minds (unless where open wickedness will justify the severest reflections), is to speak evil of the law, and to make ourselves judges of it, as well as of them who together with ourselves are to be judged by it. Nor is a judgment of that nature necessary unto our advantage in the discharge of any duty required at our hands. We may order all our concernments towards churches and persons without making any such judgment concerning them. But so strong is the inclination of some persons unto an excess in this kind, that no consideration can prevail with them to cast it out according to its desert. Whether they do it as approving and justifying themselves in what they condemn in others, or as a thing conducing unto their interests, or out of faction and an especial love to some one party of men, or some secret animosities and hatred against others, it is a matter they seldom will quit themselves of, whilst they are in this world. Yea, so far do some suffer themselves to be transported, as that they cannot restrain from charging of others with the guilt of such things as they know to be charged on themselves, by them who pretend to be the only competent judges in such cases. And so will they also reflect upon, and complain of other men for miscarriages by severities, in instances exceedingly inferior, as by themselves represented, unto what it is known they were engaged in. But men are apt to think well of all they do themselves, or those whom they peculiarly regard, and to aggravate whatever they conceive amiss in such as they dislike. Were it not better by love to cover a multitude of faults, and to leave the judgment of persons and things, wherein we are not concerned, unto him 'who judgeth righteously, and will render unto every man according to his works?' However, certain it is, that until this evil fountain of bitter waters be stopped, until we cease to bless God even the Father, and at the same time to curse men made after the similitude of God, the wounds that have been given to the love and peace of professors will not be healed.

Thirdly, Unto the same end are all men forbidden to think that they have a dominion over the faith of others, or that the ordering and disposal of it is committed unto them. It is Christ alone who is the Lord of the consciences of his disciples. And therefore the best and greatest of the sons of

men, who have been appointed by him to deal with others in his name, have constantly disclaimed all thoughts of power or rule over the consciences or faith of the meanest of his subjects.[d] How many ways this may be done we are filled with experiences; for no way whereby it may be so hath been left unattempted. And the evil of it hath invaded both churches and particular persons: some whereof who have been active in casting off the dominion of others, seemed to have designed a possession of it in themselves. And it is well if where one pope is rejected, many do not rise in his place who want nothing but his power and interest to do his work. The indignation of some, that others do not in all things comply with their sentiments, and subject themselves unto their apprehensions and dictates, ariseth from this presumption: and the persecutions wherein others engage, do all grow out of the same bitter root. For men can no otherwise satisfy their consciences herein, but by a supposition that they are warranted to give measures unto the minds and practices of others, that is, their faith and consciences in sacred things. And whilst this presumptuous supposition under any pretence or colour possesseth the minds of men, it will variously act itself unto the destruction of that gospel unity which it is our duty to preserve. For when they are persuaded that others ought to give up themselves absolutely to their guidance in the things of religion, either because of their office and dignity, or because they are wiser than they, or it may be are only able to dispute more than they, if they do not immediately so do, especially seeing they cannot but judge themselves in the right in all things, they are ready to charge their refusal on all the corrupt affections, principles, and practices, which they can surmise, or their supposed just indignation suggest unto them. That they are proud, ignorant, self-conceited, wilful, factions, is immediately concluded; and a semblance unto such charges shall be diligently sought out and improved. Nothing but a deceiving apprehension that they are some way or other meet to have a dominion over the faith of their brethren and fellow-servants, would prevail with men otherwise sober and learned, so to deal with all that dissent from them, as they are pleased to do.

[d] 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.

Fourthly, All these evils mentioned are much increased in the minds of men, when they are puffed up with a conceit of their own knowledge and wisdom.[e] This therefore we are warned to avoid, that the edification of the church may be promoted, and love preserved. For hence are very many apt to take false measures of things, especially of themselves, and thereon to cast themselves into many mischievous mistakes.[f] And this is apt to befall them, who for ends best known unto themselves, have with any ordinary diligence attended to the study of learning. For on a supposal of some competent furniture with natural abilities, they cannot but attain some skill and knowledge that the common sort of unstudied persons are unacquainted withal. Ofttimes, indeed, their pre-eminence in this kind consists in matters of very small consequence or importance. But whatever it be, it is ready to make them think strange of the apostle's advice, 'If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise:'[g] apt it is to puff them up, to influence their minds with a good conceit of themselves, and a contempt of others. Hence may we see some when they have got a little skill in languages, and through custom advantaged by the reading of some books, are able readily to express some thoughts, perhaps not originally their own, presently conceit themselves to be so much wiser than the multitude of unlettered persons, that they are altogether impatient that in any thing they should dissent from them; and this is a common frame with them whose learning and wit being their all, do yet but reach half way towards the useful ends of such things. Others also there are, and of them not a few, who having been in the ways wherein the skill and knowledge mentioned are usually attained, yet through their incapacity or negligence, or some depraved habit of mind or course of life, have not really at all improved in them. And yet these also, having once attained the countenance of elccesiastical offices or preferments, are as forward as any to declaim against, and pretend a contempt of, that ignorance in others, which they are not so stupid as not to know that the guilt of it may be reflected on themselves. However, these things at best, and in their highest improvement, are far enough from solid wisdom; especially

[e] Rom. xii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 1. [f] 2 Cor. x. 12. [g] 1 Cor. iii. 18.

that which is from above, and which alone will promote the peace and edification of the church. Some have no advantage by them, but that they can declare and speak out their own weakness; others that they can rail, and lie, and falsely accuse, in words and language wherewith they hope to please the vilest of men. And certain it is, that science, which whatever it be without the grace of God, is but falsely so called, and oftentimes falsely pretended unto, for this evil end of it alone is apt to lift up the minds above others, who perhaps come not behind them in any useful understanding. Yea, suppose men to have really attained a singular degree in useful knowledge and wisdom, and that either in things spiritual and divine, or in learning and sciences, or in political prudence; yet experience shews us, that a hurtful elation of mind is apt to arise from them, if the souls of men be not well balanced with humility, and this evil particularly watched against. Hence ariseth that impatience of contradiction, that jealousy and tenderness of men's own names and reputations, those sharp revenges they are ready to take of any supposed inroads upon them, or disrespects towards them, that contempt and undervaluation of other men's judgments, those magisterial impositions and censures which proceed from men under a reputation of these endowments. The cautions given us in the Scripture against this frame of spirit, the examples that are proposed unto us to the contrary, even that of Christ himself, the commands that are multiplied for lowliness of mind, jealousy over ourselves, the sovereignty of God in choosing whom he pleaseth to reveal his mind and truth unto and by, may in the consideration of them be useful to prevent such reprisals with pride, self-conceit, and contempt of others, as supposed or abused knowledge are apt to cast men into, whereby divisions are greatly fomented and increased among us. But it may be these things will not much prevail with them, who pretending a zeal and principle above others in preaching and urging the examples of Christ, do in most of their ways and actings, and in some of their writings, give us an unparalleled representation of the devil.

Lastly, It is confessed by all, that false teachers, seducers, broachers of novel, corrupt, and heretical doctrines, have caused many breaches and divisions among such as once

agreed in the profession of the same truths and points of faith: by means of such persons, whether within the present church-state or without, there is scarce any sacred truth, which had formerly secured its station and possession in the minds of the generality of Christians in this nation, but what hath been solicited or opposed. Some make their errors the principal foundation, rule, and measure, in communion; whoever complies with them therein, is of them; and whoso doth not, they avoid; so at once they shut up themselves from having any thing to do with them that love truth and peace. And where these consequents do not ensue, men's zeal for their errors being overbalanced by their love of, and concern in, their secular interest, and their minds influenced by the novel prevailing opinion of a great indifferency in all things appertaining unto outward worship; yet the advancing and fomenting of opinions contrary unto that sound doctrine which hath been generally owned and taught by the learned and godly pastors, and received by the people themselves, cannot but occasion strife, contentions, and divisions among professors. And it may be, there are very few of those articles or heads of religion, which in the beginning of the reformation, and a long time after, were looked on as the most useful, important, and necessary parts of our profession, that have not been among us variously opposed and corrupted. And in these differences about doctrine, lie the hidden causes of the animosities whereby those about worship and discipline are managed. For those who have the advantage of law and power on their side in these lesser things, are not so unwise as to deal openly with their adversaries about those things wherein the reputation of established and commonly received doctrines lie against them. But under the pretence and shelter of contending for legal appointments, not a few do exercise an enmity against those who profess the truth, which they think it not meet as yet openly to oppose.

Such are the causes, and such are the occasions of the differences and divisions in and about religious concerns, that are among us; by which means they have been fomented and increased: heightened they have been by the

personal faults and miscarriages of many of all sorts and parties. And as the reproof of their sinful failings is in its proper season a necessary duty; so no reformation or amendment of persons will give a full relief, nor free us from the evil of our divisions, until the principles and ways which occasion them be taken out of the way.

CHAP. V.

Grounds and reasons of nonconformity.

HAVING briefly declared our sense concerning the general causes and occasions of our differences, and that present want of Christian love which is complained of by many; we shall now return to give some more particular account concerning our inconformity unto, and non-compliance with, the observances and constitutions of the church of England. It is acknowledged, that we do in sundry things dissent from them; that we do not, that we cannot, come up unto a joint practice with others in them. It is also confessed, that hereon there doth ensue an appearance of schism between them and us, according as the common notion of it is received in the world. And because in this distance and difference, the dissent unto compliance is on our parts; there is a semblance of a voluntary relinquishment of their communion. And this we know exposeth us, in vulgar judgments and apprehensions, unto the charge of schism, and necessitateth us unto self-defence; as though the only matter in question were, whether we are guilty of this evil or no. For that advantage have all churches which have had an opportunity to fix terms of communion, right or wrong, just or unequal; the differences which ensue thereon, they will try out on no other terms, but only whether those that dissent from them, are schismatics or not. Thus they make themselves actors ofttimes in this cause, who ought in the first place to be charged with injury; and a trial is made merely at the hazard of the reputation of those, who are causelessly put upon their purgation and defence. Yea, with many, a kind of possession and multitude, do render dissenters un-

questionably schismatical; so that it is esteemed an unreasonable confidence in them, to deny themselves so to be. So deals the church of Rome with those that are reformed. An open schism there is between them; and if they cannot sufficiently fix the guilt of it on the reformed, by confidence and clamours, with the advantage of prepossession; yet, as if they were perfectly innocent themselves, they will allow of no other inquiry in this matter, but what consists in calling the truth and reputation of the other party into question. It being our present condition to lie under this charge from many, whose interest it is to have us thought guilty thereof, we do deny that there is any culpable secession made by us, from the communion of any that profess the gospel in these nations, or that the blame of the appearing schism that is among us, can duly or justly be reflected on us; which in the remainder of our discourse, we shall make to appear.

What are our thoughts and judgments concerning the church-state and interest of the professors of the gospel in this nation, we have before declared. And we hope they are such, that in the judgment of persons sober and impartial, we shall be relieved from those clamorous accusations, which are without number or measure, by some cast upon us. Our prayers are also continually unto the God of love and peace for the taking away of all divisions and their causes from among us. Nor is the satisfaction which ariseth from our sincerity herein, in the least taken off, or rent from us, by the uncharitable endeavours of some, to rake up pretences to the contrary. And should those, in whose power it is, think meet to imitate the pastors and guides of the churches of old, and to follow them in any of the ways which they used for the restoration of unity and agreement unto Christians, when lost or endangered, we should not decline the contribution of any assistance, by counsel or fraternal compliance, which God should be pleased to supply us withal. But whilst some whose advantages render them considerable in these matters, seem to entertain no other thoughts concerning us, but what issue in violence and oppression, the principal duty incumbent on us is, quietly to approve our consciences unto God, that in sincerity of heart we desire in all things to please him, and to conform our lives, principles, and practices to his will, so far as he is graciously

pleased to make it known unto us. And as for men, we hope so to discharge the duty required of us, as that none may justly charge us with any disorders, unpeaceableness, or other evils: for we do not apprehend that we are either the cause or culpable occasion of those inconveniencies and troubles which some have put themselves unto by their endeavours for our disturbance, impoverishing, and ruin. Let none imagine, but that we have considered the evils, and evil consequents of the schisms and divisions that are among us; and those who do so, do it upon the forfeiture of their charity. We know how much the great work of preaching the gospel unto the conversion of the souls of men is impeded thereby; as also what prejudice ariseth thence against the truth, wherein we are all agreed; with what temptations and mutual exasperations, to the loss of love, and the occasioning of many sinful miscarriages in persons of all sorts, do hereon ensue: but we deny that it is in our power to remove them, or take them out of the way; nor are we conscious unto ourselves of any sin or evil, in what we do, or in what we do not do, by our not doing of it in the worship of God. It is duty alone unto Jesus Christ, whereunto in these things we attend, and wherein we ought so to do. And where matters of this nature are so circumstanced, as that duty will contribute nothing towards unity, we are at a loss for any progress towards it. The sum of what is objected unto us (as hath been observed) is our nonconformity, or our forbearance of actual personal communion with the present church-constitutions, in the modes, rites, and ceremonies of its worship: hence the schism complained of doth ensue. Unless the communion be total, constant, without endeavour of any alteration or reformation, we cannot in the judgment of some, be freed from the guilt hereof. This we deny, and are persuaded that it is to be charged elsewhere. For,

First, All the conditions of absolute and complete communion with the church of England which are proposed unto us, and indispensably required of us, especially as we are ministers, are unscriptural; such as the word of God doth neither warrant, mention, nor intimate, especially not under any such consideration, as necessary conditions of communion in or among the churches of Christ. We dispute

not now about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of things in themselves; nor whether they may be observed or no, by such as have no conviction of any sin or evil in them. Neither do we judge or censure them, by whom they are observed: our inquiry is solely about our own liberty and duty. And what concerneth them, is resolved into this one question, as to the argument in hand: Whether such things or observances in the worship of God, as are wholly unscriptural, may be so made the indispensable condition of communion with any particular church, as that they by whom they are so made and imposed on others, should be justified in their so doing; and that if any differences, divisions, or schisms do ensue thereon, the guilt and blame of them must necessarily fall on those who refuse submission to them, or to admit of them as such? That the conditions proposed unto us, and imposed on us indispensably, if we intend to enjoy the communion of this church, are of this nature, we shall afterward prove by an induction of instances. Nor is it of any concernment in this matter, what place the things inquired after do hold, or are supposed to hold in the worship of God; our present inquiry is about their warranty to be made conditions of church-communion. Now we are persuaded that the Lord Christ hath set his disciples at liberty from accepting of such terms of communion from any churches in the world. And on the same grounds we deny, that he hath given or granted unto them authority, to constitute such terms and conditions of their communion, and indispensably to impose them upon all that enjoy it, according to their several capacities and concerns therein. For,

1. The rule of communion among the disciples of Christ in all his churches, is invariably established and fixed by himself. His commission, direction, and command, given out unto the first planters and founders of them, containing an obliging rule unto all that should succeed them throughout all generations, hath so established the bounds, limits, and conditions of church-communion, as that it is not lawful for any to attempt their removal or alteration. 'Go ye,' saith he to them, 'and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever

I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'[a] All the benefits and blessings, all the comfort and use of church-assembles and communion, depends alone on the promise of the presence of Christ with them. Thence doth all the authority that may be exercised in them proceed; and thence doth the efficacy of what they do unto the edification of the souls of men, arise and flow. Now that any one may thus enjoy the presence of Christ in any church, with the fruits and benefits of it, no more can be required of him, but that through the preaching of the gospel, and baptism, being made a professed disciple, he do or be ready to do and observe all whatsoever Christ hath commanded. This hath he established as the rule of communion among his disciples and churches in all generations. In all other things which do relate unto the worship of God, he hath set them and left them at liberty,[b] which so far as it is a grant and privilege purchased for them, they are obliged to make good and maintain. We know it will be here replied, that among the commands of Christ, it is, that we should hear the church, and obey the guides and rulers thereof: whatever therefore is appointed by them, we are to submit unto and observe, even by virtue of the command of Christ. And indeed it is certainly true, that it is the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that we should both hear the church and obey the guides of it: but by virtue of this rule, neither the church nor its guides can make any thing necessary to the disciples of Christ, as a condition of communion with them, but only what he hath commanded. For the rule here laid down is given unto those guides or rulers, who are thereby bound up, in the appointments of what the disciples are to observe, unto the commands of Christ. And were a command included herein, of obeying the commands or appointments of church-guides, and the promise of the presence of Christ annexed thereunto; as he had given them all his own power, and placed them in his throne, so we had been all obliged to follow them whither ever they had carried or led us, although it were to hell itself, as some of the canonists, on this principle, have spoken concerning the pope. Here therefore is a rule of communion fixed, both unto them that are to rule in the church, and them that are to obey.

[a] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [b] Gal. vi 1.

And whereas, perhaps it may be said, that if the rulers of the church may appoint nothing in and unto the communion of the church, but what Christ hath himself commanded, then indeed is their authority little worth, yea, upon the matter none at all: for the commands of Christ are sufficiently confirmed and fixed by his own authority; and to what end then serves that of the rulers of the church? We must say, that their whole authority is limited in the text, unto teaching of men to observe what Christ hath commanded. And this they are to do with authority; but under him and in his name, and according to the rules that he hath given them. And those who think not this power sufficient for them, must seek it elsewhere; for the Lord Christ will allow no more in his churches.

To make this yet more evident, we may consider that particular instance, wherein the primitive Christians had a trial in the case as now stated before us: and this was in the matter of Mosaical ceremonies and institutions, which some would have imposed on them, as a condition of their communion in the profession of the gospel: in the determination hereof, was their liberty asserted by the apostles, and their duty declared to abide therein. And this was the most specious pretence of imposing on the liberty of Christians, that ever they were exercised withal. For the observation of these things had countenance given unto it, from their divine original, and the condescending practice of the apostles for a good season. That other instances of the like nature should be condemned in the Scripture is impossible, seeing none had then endeavoured the introduction of any of that nature. But a general rule may be established in the determination of one case, as well as in that of many; provided it be not extended beyond what is eminently included in that case. Herein, therefore, was there a direction given for the duty and practice of churches in following ages; and that in pursuit of the law and constitution of the Lord Christ before mentioned. Neither is there any force in the exception, that these things were imposed under a pretence of being commanded by God himself: for they say, to require any thing under that notion, which indeed he hath not commanded, is an adding to his command, which ought not to be admitted: but to require things indifferent, with-

out that pretence, may be allowed. But as in the former way, men add unto the commands of God formally, so in this latter, they do it materially, which also is prohibited: for in his worship, we are forbidden to add to the things that he hath appointed, no less than to pretend commands from him which he hath not given. He, therefore, who professeth and pleadeth his willingness to observe and do in church-communion, whatever Christ hath instituted and commanded, cannot regularly be refused the communion of any church, under any pretence of his refusal to do other things, which confessedly are not so required.

It is pleaded, indeed, that no other things, as to the substance of the worship of God, can or ought to be appointed, besides what is instituted by Jesus Christ: but as to the manner or modes of the performance of what he doth command, with other rites and ceremonies to be observed for order and decency, they may lawfully be instituted by the rulers of the church. Let it therefore at present be granted, that so they may be by them who are persuaded of the lawfulness of those modes, and of the things wherein they consist; seeing that is not the question at present under agitation. Neither will this concession help us in our present inquiry, unless it be also granted, that whatever may be lawfully practised in the worship of God, may be lawfully made a necessary condition of communion in that worship: but this will not be granted, nor can it ever be proved. Besides, in our present difference, this is only the judgment of one party, that the things mentioned may be lawfully observed in and among sacred administrations: and thereon the conclusion must be, that whatever some think may be lawfully practised in divine worship, may lawfully be made an indispensable condition of communion unto the whole. Nor will it give force unto this inference, that those who judge them lawful are the rulers and guides of the church, unto whose determination the judgment of private persons is not to be opposed: for we have shewed before, that a judgment concerning what any one is to do or practise in the worship of God, belongs unto every man who is to do or practise aught therein; and he who makes it not, is brutish. And the judgment which the rulers of the church are to make for the whole, or to go before it, is in what is commanded, or not so, by Jesus

Christ, not in what is fit to be added thereunto by themselves. Besides, if it must be allowed that such things may be made the conditions of church-communion, then any who are in place of authority, may multiply such conditions according unto the utmost extent of their judgments, until they become burdensome and intolerable unto all, or really ridiculous in themselves, as it is fallen out in the church of Rome. But this would prove expressly destructive unto that certain and unvariable rule of church-communion, which the Lord Christ hath fixed and established, whereof we shall speak again afterward.

Neither will that plea, which is by some insisted on in this case, yield any solid or universal relief. It is said, that some may warrantably and duly observe in the worship of God, what is unduly and unwarrantably imposed on them by others. And indeed all controversies about church-constitution, discipline, and external worship, are by some reduced unto these two heads; that the magistrate may appoint what he pleaseth, and the people may observe whatever he appoints: for as there is no government of the church determined in the Scripture, it is meet it should be erected and disposed by the supreme magistrate, who, no doubt, upon that supposition, is only fit and qualified so to do: and for outward worship, and the rites thereof, both it and they are so far indifferent, as that we may comply with whatever is imposed on us; whether they be good, or useful, or evil, lies at the doors of others to answer about. But this seems to rise up in express contradiction unto those commands which are given us, to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;' and in these things, not to be 'the servants of men.' For what do we do less than renounce the privilege of our liberty purchased for us at a high rate and price, or what are we less than 'servants of men,' whilst we bring ourselves in bondage unto the observation of such things in the worship of God, as we judge neither commanded by him, nor tending unto our own edification, but merely because by them ordained? Moreover, suppose it be the judgment of some, as it is of many, that the things mentioned, though in their own nature indifferent, do become unlawful unto them to observe when imposed as necessary conditions of all church-communion, contrary to the command

and appointment of Christ? We know this is exceedingly declaimed against as that which is perverse and froward. For what, say many, can be more unreasonable, than that things in their own nature indifferent should become unlawful because they are commanded? But it is at least no less unreasonable, that things confessedly indifferent should not be left so, but be rendered necessary unto practice, though useless in it, by arbitrary commands. But the opinion traduced, is also much mistaken. For although it be granted that the things themselves are indifferent in their own nature, not capable, but as determined by circumstances, of either moral good or evil; yet it is not granted that the observation of them, even as uncommanded, is indifferent in the worship of God. And although the command doth not alter the nature, and make that which was indifferent become evil, yet that command of itself being contrary to many divine commands and instructions given us in the Scripture, a compliance with the things commanded therein may become unlawful to us. And what shall they do whose judgment this is? shall they admit of them as lawful, upon the consideration of that change about them which renders them unlawful? This they will not easily be induced to give their assent unto.

Let therefore the rule of church-communion be observed, which our Lord Jesus Christ hath fixed; and no small occasion of our strifes and divisions will be removed out of the way. But whilst there is this contest amongst us, if one pleads his readiness 'to do and observe whatever the Lord Christ hath commanded,' and cannot be convinced of insincerity in his profession, or of want of understanding in any known institution of his, and thereon requires the communion of any church; but others say, Nay, you shall observe and do sundry other things that we ourselves have appointed, or you shall have no communion with us; as it cannot be but that divisions and schisms will ensue thereon, so it will not be difficult for an indifferent by-stander to judge on whether side the occasion and guilt of them doth remain.

2. We have the practice of the apostles in the pursuance of the direction and command of their Lord and ours, for our guide in this cause. And it may be well and safely thought, that this should give a certain rule unto the

proceedings and actings of all church-guides in future ages. Now they did never make any thing unscriptural, or what they had not received by divine revelation, to be a condition of communion in religious worship and church-order among Christians. For as they testified themselves 'that they would continually give themselves unto prayer and the ministry of the word,'[c] so it was of old observed concerning them, 'that their constant labour was for the good of the souls of men in their conversion unto God, and edification in faith and holiness;'[d] but as for the institution of festivals or fasts, of rites or ceremonies to be observed in the worship of the churches, they intermeddled with no such things. And thence it came to pass, that in the first entrance and admission of observances about such things, there was a great and endless variety in them, both as to the things themselves observed, and as to the manner of their observation. And this was gradually increased unto such a height and excess as that the burden of them became intolerable unto Christendom. Nor indeed could any better success be expected in a relinquishment and departure from the pattern of church-order, given us in their example and practice. Neither is the plea from hence built merely on this consideration, that no man alive, either from their writings, or the approved records of those times, can manifest that they ever prescribed unto the churches, or imposed on them the observance of any uninstituted rite, to be observed as a measure and rule of their communion; but also it so fell out in the good providence of God, that the case under debate was proposed unto them, and jointly determined by them. For being called unto advice and counsel in the difference that was between the Jewish and Gentile converts and professors, wherein the former laboured to impose on the latter the observation of Moses's institutions as the condition of their joint communion, as was mentioned even now, they not only determine against any such imposition, but also expressly declare, that nothing but necessary things (that is, such as are so from other reasons antecedently unto their prescriptions and appointments) ought to be required of any Christians in the communion or worship of the church.[e] And as they neither did nor would on that great

[c] Acts vi. 4. [d] Socrat. Hist. lib. 5. [e] Acts xv.

occasion, in that solemn assembly, appoint any one thing to be observed by the disciples and churches which the Lord Christ had not commanded; so in their direction given unto the Gentile believers for a temporary abstinence from the use of their liberty in one or two instances whereunto it did extend, they plainly intimate, that it was the avoidance of a present scandal which might have greatly retarded the progress of the gospel, that was the reason of that direction. And in such cases it is granted, that we may in many things for a season forego the use of our liberty. This was their way and practice, this the example which they left unto all that should follow them in the rule and guidance of the church. Whence it is come to pass in after ages, that men should think themselves wiser than they, or more careful to provide for the peace and unity of the church, we know not. But let the bounds and measures of church-communion fixed in and by their example, stand unmoved, and many causes of our present divisions will be taken away. But it may be it will be offered, that the present state of things in the world requires some alteration in, or variation from, the precise example of the apostles in this matter. The due observation of the institutions of Christ in such manner as the nature of them required, was then sufficient unto the peace and unity of the churches. But primitive simplicity is now decayed among the most; so that a multiplication of rules and observances is needful for the same ends. But we have shewed before, that the accommodation of church-rule and communion to the degeneracy of Christians or churches, or their secular engagements, is no way advantageous unto religion. Let them whose duty it is endeavour to reduce professors and profession to the primitive standard of light, humility, and holiness, and they may be ordered in all church concerns according to the apostolical pattern. Wherefore, when Christians unto the former plea of their readiness to observe and do whatsoever Christ hath commanded them, do also add their willingness to comply with whatever the apostles of Christ have either by precept, or example in their own practice, commended unto them, or did do or require in the first churches, and cannot be convinced of failing to make good their profession; we do not know whence any can derive a warranty enabling them to impose any other condi-

tions of communion on them. The institution therefore of the Lord Christ, and the practice of the apostles, lie directly against the imposing of the conditions inquired about. And first to invent them, then to impose them, making them necessary to be observed, and then to judge and censure them as schismatics, as enemies to love and peace, who do not submit unto them, looks not unlike the exercise of an unwarrantable dominion over the faith and consciences of the disciples of Christ.

3. Not only by their example and practice, but they have also doctrinally declared what is the duty of churches, and what is the liberty of Christians in this matter. The apostle Paul discourseth at large hereon, Rom. xiv. xv. The attentive reading of those two chapters is sufficient to determine this cause among all uninterested and unprejudiced persons. He supposeth in them, and it is the case which he exemplifies in sundry instances, that there were among Christians and churches at that time different apprehensions and observances about some things appertaining unto the worship of God: and these things were such as had some seeming countenance of a sacred and divine authority, for such was their original institution. Some in the consideration hereof, judged that they were still to be observed, and their consciences had been long exercised in a holy subjection unto the authority of God in the observance of them. Nor was there yet any express and positive law enacted for their abrogation; but the ceasing of any obligation under their observance from their primitive institution, was to be gathered from the nature of God's economy towards his church. Many therefore continued to observe them, esteeming it their duty so to do. Others were persuaded and satisfied that they were freed from any obligation unto the owning and observance of them. And whereas this liberty was given them by Jesus Christ in the gospel, they were resolved to make use of it, and not to comply with the other sort, who pressed conformity upon them in their ceremonies and modes of divine worship. So it may fall out in other instances. Some may be persuaded that such or such things may be lawful for them to observe in the worship of God; they may be so unto them, and, as is supposed, in their own nature. On the consideration of

some circumstances they may judge that it is convenient or expedient to attend unto their observance; lastly, all coincidences weighed, that it is necessary that so they should do; and that others also that walk with them in the profession of the gospel should conform themselves unto their order and practice. On the other hand some there are, who, because the things of the joint practice required, are not appointed by Jesus Christ, nor doth it appear unto them that he hath given power unto any others to appoint them, do not judge it expedient, nor yet, all circumstances considered, lawful to observe them. Now whereas this case answers unto that before proposed, the determination thereof given by the apostle may safely be applied unto this also. What rule therefore doth he give therein, which he would have attended unto, as the means for the preservation of love, peace, and unity among them? Is it that the former sort of persons, provided they be the most, or have the most power, ought to impose the practice of those things which they esteem lawful and convenient, on those who judge them not so; when it is out of question that they are not appointed by Christ; only it is pretended that they are not forbidden by him? Where indeed the question was about the institutions of Christ, he binds up the churches precisely unto what he had received from him.[f] But in cases of this nature, wherein a direct command of Christ cannot be pleaded, nor is pretended, he absolutely rejects and condemns all thoughts of such a procedure. But supposing that differences in judgment and practice were and would be among Christians, the sum of his advice is, that all offences and scandals ought to be diligently avoided; that censuring, judging, and despisings, on the account of such differences, be cast out; that tenderness be used towards them that are weak, and nothing severely pressed on them that doubt; and for their different apprehensions and ways, they should all walk in peace, condescending unto, and bearing with, one another. Nothing can more evidently determine the unlawfulness of imposing on Christians unscriptural conditions of communion, than do the discourses of that great apostle to this purpose. Yea, better it is, and more agreeable unto the mind of Christ, that persons and particular churches

[f] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

should be left unto different observations in sundry things relating unto sacred worship, wherein they cannot join with each other, nor communicate together, endeavouring in the mean time to 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' than that they should be enforced unto a uniformity in the practice of things that have not the immediate authority of Christ enstamped on them. Accordingly it so fell out among them unto whom the apostle gave these directions, and that suitably unto his intention in them. For the dissenting parties agreeing in the common faith and profession of the gospel, did yet constantly meet in distinct assemblies or churches for the celebration of holy worship, because of the different rites wherein they did not agree. And in this posture were peace and love continued among them, until in process of time their differences through mutual forbearance being extinguished, they coalesced into one church-state and order: and the former peace which they had in their distances was deemed sufficient, whilst things were not measured nor regulated by secular interest or advantages. But it is a part of our present unhappiness, that such a peace among Christians and particular churches is mistaken to have an ill aspect upon the concerns of some belonging unto the church in power, honour, and revenue. But as we apprehend there is, as things are now stated among us, a plain mistake in this surmise; so, if the glory of God and the honour of the gospel were chief in our consultations about church affairs, it would be with us of no such consideration, as to hinder us from committing quietly the success and events of duty unto the providence of God.

4. There was also a signal vindication of the truth pleaded for, in an instance of fact among the primitive churches. There was an opinion which prevailed very early among them, about the necessary observation of Easter, in the room of the Jewish passover; for the solemn commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Saviour: and it was taken for granted by most of them, that the observance hereof was countenanced, if not rendered necessary unto them, by the example of the apostles. For they generally believed that by them it was observed, and that it was their duty to accommodate themselves unto their practice; only there was a difference about the precise time or

day, which they were to solemnize as the head and rule of their festival; as every undue presumption hath one lameness or other accompanying it: it is truth alone which is square and steady. Some therefore pleaded the example of John the apostle and evangelist, who as it is strongly asserted and testified by multitudes, kept his Easter at such a time, and by such a rule, whom they thought meet to follow and imitate. Others, not inferior unto them in number or authority, opposed unto their time the example of Peter, whom they affirmed (on what grounds and reasons they know best, for they are now lost) to have observed his Easter at another time, and according unto a different rule. And it is scarcely imaginable how the contests hereabouts troubled the churches both of Europe and Asia; who certainly had things more material to have exercised themselves about. The church of Rome embraced that opinion, which at length prevailed over the other, and obtained a kind of catholicism against that which was countenanced only by the authority of St. John; as that church was always wondrous happy in reducing other churches unto an acquiescency in its sentiments, as seldom wanting desire or skill dexterously to improve its manifold advantages. Now this was that Easter was to be celebrated on the Lord's day only, and not by the rule of the Jewish passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, what day of the week soever it fell out upon. Hereon Victor, the bishop of that church, being confident that the truth was on his side, namely, that Easter was to be observed on the Lord's day, resolved to make it a condition of communion unto all the churches; for otherwise he saw not how there could be either union, peace, or uniformity among them. He did not question but that he had a good foundation to build upon: for that Easter was to be observed by virtue of apostolical tradition, was generally granted by all. And he took it as unquestionable upon a current and prevalent rumour, that the observation of it was confined to the Lord's day by the example of St. Peter. Hereupon he refused the communion of all that would not conform unto his resolution for the observation of Easter on the Lord's day; and cast out of communion all those persons and churches who would observe any other day; which proved to be the condition of the principal

churches of Asia, amongst whom the apostle John did longest converse. Here was our present case directly exemplified, or represented so long beforehand; the success only of this fact of his, remaineth to be inquired into. Now it is known unto all what entertainment this his new rule of communion found among the churches of Christ. The reproof of his precipitancy, and irregular fixing new bounds unto church-communion, was famous in those days: especially the rebuke given unto him and his practice, by one of the most holy and learned persons then living, is eminently celebrated, as consonant to truth and peace, by those who have transmitted unto us the reports of those times. He who himself first condemned others rashly, was for his so doing generally condemned by all. Suppose now that any persons living at Rome, and there called into communion with the church, should have had the condition thereof proposed unto them; namely, that they should assent and declare, that the observation of Easter by apostolical tradition was to be on the Lord's day only; and upon their refusal so to do, should be excluded from communion, or on their own accords should refrain from it; where should the guilt of this disorder and schism be charged? And thus it fell out, not only with those who came out of Asia to Rome, who were not received by their Diotrephes; but also with sundry in that church itself, as Blastus and others; as what great divisions were occasioned hereby between the Saxons and Britains, hath been by many declared. But in the judgment of the primitive churches, the guilt of these schisms was to be charged on them that coined and imposed these new rules and conditions of communion. And had they not been judged by any, the pernicious consequences of this temerarious attempt are sufficient to reflect no inconsiderable guilt upon it. Neither could the whole observance itself, from first to last, ever compensate that loss of love and peace among Christians and churches, which was occasioned thereby; nor hath the introduction of such things ever obtained any better success in the church of God. How free the churches were until that time, after they were once delivered from the attempt of the circumcised professors to impose upon them the ceremonies of Moses, from any appearance of unwritten conditions of

communion, is manifest unto all, who have looked into the monuments which remain of those times. It it very true, that sundry Christians took upon them very early, the observation of sundry rites and usages in religion, whereunto they had no guidance or direction by the word of God. For as the corrupted nature of man, is prone to the invention and use of sensible present things in religion, especially where persons are not able to find satisfaction in those that are purely spiritual, requiring great intention of mind and affections in their exercise; so were they many of them easily infected by that tincture which remained in them from the Judaism or Gentilism from which they were converted. But these observances were free, and taken up by men of their own accord; not only every church, but every person in the most of them, as far as it appears, being left unto their own liberty. Some ages it was before such things were turned into laws and canons; and that perhaps first by heretics, or at least under such a degeneracy, as our minds and consciences cannot be regulated by. The judgment, therefore, and practice of the first churches are manifest against such impositions.

5. Upon a supposition that it should be lawful for any persons or churches to assign unscriptural conditions of their communion, it will follow, that there is no certain rule of communion amongst Christians fixed and determined by Christ. That this is otherwise we have before declared, and shall now only manifest the evil consequences of such a supposition. For if it be so, no man can claim an admission into the society or communion of any church, or a participation in the ordinances of the gospel with them, by virtue of the authority of Jesus Christ. For notwithstanding all his pleas of submission to his institutions, and the observation of his commands, every church may propose something, yea, many things unto him, that he hath not appointed, without an admission whereof, and subjection thereunto, he may be justly excluded from all church privileges among them. Now this seems not consonant unto the authority that Christ hath over the church, nor that honour which ought to be given unto him therein. Nor on the same supposition are his laws sufficient to rule and quiet the consciences, or to provide for the edification of his disciples.

Now if Diotrephes is blamed, for not receiving the brethren, who were recommended unto the church by the apostle,[s] probably because they would not submit to that pre-eminence which he had obtained among them, they will scarcely escape without reproof, who refuse those whom the Lord Christ commends unto them by the rules of the gospel, because they will not submit unto such new impositions as by virtue of their pre-eminence they would put upon them. And what endless perplexities they must be cast into, who have learned in these things to call him only Lord and Master, is apparent unto all. Baptism, with a voluntary credible profession of faith, repentance, and obedience unto the Lord Christ in his commands and institutions, is all the warranty which he hath given unto any of his disciples, to claim their admission into his churches, which are instituted and appointed to receive them, and to build them up in their faith. And if any person who produceth this warranty, and thereon desireth, according to order, the communion of any church; if he may be excluded from it, or forbidden an entrance into it, unless it be on grounds sufficient in the judgment of charity to evince the falseness and hypocrisy of his profession, little regard is had to the authority of Christ, and too much unto men's own. Churches indeed may more or less insist upon the explicitness of this profession, and the evidences of its sincerity, as they find it tend to their peace and edification, with a due attendance unto the rule and example left unto them in this matter in the gospel. And that the exercise of this power in any churches may not turn to the prejudice of any, every professor is allowed, with reference unto particular assemblies, to make his choice of the measure he will comply withal; at least if he will make the choice of his habitation subservient unto his edification. Hereby the peace and duty, both of churches and private persons are secured. And this rule of church admission and communion, furnished Christians with peace, love, and unity for many ages, setting aside the ruffle given them in the rashness of Victor before mentioned. It was also rendered practicable and easy, by virtue of their communion as churches among themselves: for from thence, commendatory letters supplied the room of actual profes-

[s] 3 John 9, 10.

fession in them who having been admitted into one church, did desire the same privilege in any other. And on this rule were persons to be received, though weak in the faith, though it may be in some things otherwise minded than the generality of the church, though babes and unskilful, as to degrees, in the word of truth.[h] But this rule was always attended with a proviso, that men did not contradict or destroy their own profession by any unholy conversation: for such persons never were, nor never are to be admitted unto the especial ordinances of the church; and a neglect of due attendance hereunto, is that which principally hath cast us into all our confusions, and rendered the institutions of Christ ineffectual. And if this warranty which the Lord Christ hath given unto his disciples, of claiming a participation in all the privileges of his churches, an admission unto a joint performance of all the duties required in them, may, upon the supposition of a power left to impose other conditions of communion on them, be rejected and rendered useless, all church-communion is absolutely resolved into the variable wills of men. The church no doubt may judge and determine upon the laws of Christ, and their due application unto particular occasions; as whether such persons may according to them be admitted in their fellowship. To deprive churches of this liberty, is to take away their principal use and service. But to make laws of their own, the subject matter whereof shall be things not commanded by Christ, and to make them the rule of admitting professed Christians unto their communion, is an assumption that cannot be justified. And it is certain, that the assuming of an authority by some churches for such-like impositions, is that which hath principally occasioned many to deny them so to be; so at once to overthrow the foundation of all that authority, which in so many instances they find to be abused. And although the church of Rome may prevail on weak and credulous persons, by proposing unto them an absolute acquiescency in their dictates and determinations, as the best, readiest, and most facile means of satisfaction; yet there is nothing that doth more alienate wise and conscientious persons from them, than doth that unreasonable proposal. Moreover, it is highly probable that endless dis-

[h] Rom. xiv. 1. Phil. iii. 15. Heb. v. 12—14.

putes will arise on this supposition, about what is meet and convenient, and what not, to be added unto the Scripture rules of communion. They have done so in the ages past, and continue yet to do. Nor can any man on this principle know, or probably conjecture, when he hath a firm station in the church, or an indefeasible interest in the privileges thereof. For supposing that he hath concocted the impositions of one church, on the first removal of his habitation, he may have new conditions of communion prescribed unto him. And from this perplexity nothing can relieve him, but a resolution to do in every place whereunto he may come, according to the manner of the place, be it good or bad, right or wrong. But neither hath the Lord Christ left his disciples in this uncertainty which the case supposeth, nor will accept of that indifferency which is in the remedy suggested. They therefore who regulate their communion with any churches, by the firm stated law of their right and privilege, if they are not received thereon, do not by their abstinence from it, contract the guilt of schism or any blameable divisions.

Moreover, upon a supposition of such a liberty and power to prescribe and impose unwritten conditions of church-communion on Christians, who or what law doth, or shall prescribe bounds unto men, that they do not proceed in their prescriptions beyond what is useful unto edification, or unto what will be really burdensome and intolerable unto churches. To say that those who claim this power may be securely trusted with it, for they will be sure not to fall into any such excesses, will scarcely give satisfaction: for besides that such a kind of power is exceedingly apt to swell and extend itself unmeasurably, the common experience of Christendom lies against this suggestion. Was not an excess of this kind complained of by Austin of old, when yet the observation of ecclesiastical customs was much more voluntary than in after ages; neither were they made absolutely conditions of communion, unless among a very few? Do not all Protestants grant and plead that the papal church hath exceeded all bounds of moderation and sobriety herein; so that from thence they take the principal warranty of their secession from it? Do not other churches mutually charge one another on the same account? Hath not a charge of this excess been the ball of contention in

this nation ever since the reformation? If then there be such a power in any, either the exercise of it is confined unto certain instances by some power superior unto them, or it is left absolutely, as unto all particulars whereunto it may be extended, unto their own prudence and discretion. The first will not be asserted, nor can be so, unless the instances intended can be recounted, and the confirming power be declared. If the latter be affirmed, then let them run into what excesses they please, unless they judge themselves that so they do, which is morally impossible that they should, none ought ever to complain of what they do: for there is no failure in them who attend unto their rule; which in this case is supposed to be men's own prudence and discretion. And this was directly the state of things in the church of Rome; whence they thought it always exceedingly unequal that any of their ecclesiastical laws should be called in question; since they made them according to their own judgment, the sole rule of exercising their authority in such things. Where is the certainty and stability of this rule? Is it probable that the communion and peace of all churches, and all Christians, are left to be regulated by it? And who will give assurance that no one condition directly unlawful in itself shall be prescribed and imposed by persons enjoying this pretended power? Or who can undertake that the number of such conditions as may be countenanced by a plea of being things in their own nature indifferent, shall not be increased until they come to be such a burden and yoke as are too heavy for the disciples of Christ to bear, and unlawful for them to submit themselves unto? May any make a judgment but themselves who impose them, when the number of such things grows to a blameable excess? If others may judge, at least for themselves, and their own practice, and so of what is lawful or not, it is all that is desired. If themselves are the only judges, the case seems very hard, and our secession from the church of Rome scarcely warrantable. And who sees not what endless contests and differences will ensue on these suppositions, if the whole liberty of men's judgments, and all apprehensions of duty in professors, be not swallowed up in the gulf of atheistical indifferency, as to all the concerns of outward worship?

The whole of what hath been pleaded on this head, might

be confirmed with the testimony of many of the learned writers of the church of England, in the defence of our secession from that of Rome. But we shall not here produce them in particular. The sum of what is pleaded by them, is, That the being of the catholic church lies in essentials; that for a particular church to disagree from all other particular churches in some extrinsical and accidental things, is not to separate from the catholic church, so as to cease to be a church; but still whatever church makes such extrinsical things the necessary conditions of communion, so as to cast men out of the church, who yield not to them, is schismatical in its so doing, and the separation from it is so far from being schism, that being cast out of that church on those terms only, returns them unto the communion of the catholic church. And nothing can be more unreasonable, than that the society imposing such conditions of communion, should be judge whether those conditions be just and equitable or no. To this purpose do they generally plead our common cause. Wherefore, from what hath been discoursed, we doubt not but to affirm, that where unscriptural conditions of communion, indispensably to be submitted unto and observed, are by any church imposed on those whom they expect or require to join in their fellowship, communion, and order; if they on whom they are so imposed, do thereon withhold or withdraw themselves from the communion of that church, especially in the acts, duties, and parts of worship, wherein a submission unto these conditions is expressed either verbally or virtually, they are not thereon to be esteemed guilty of schism; but the whole fault of the divisions which ensue thereon, is to be charged on them who insist on the necessity of their imposition.

That this is the condition of things with us at present, especially such as are ministers of the gospel, with reference unto the church of England, as it is known in itself, so it may be evidenced unto all, by an enumeration of the particulars that are required of us, if we will be comprehended in the communion and fellowship thereof.

For, 1. It is indispensably enjoined, that we give a solemn attestation unto the liturgy, and all contained in it, by the subscription or declaration of our assent and consent there-

unto; which must be accompanied with the constant use of it in the whole worship of God. As was before observed, we dispute not now about the lawfulness of the use of liturgies, in the public service of the church; nor of that in particular which is established among us by the laws of the land. Were it only proposed or recommended unto ministers for the use of it in whole or in part, according as it should be found needful unto the edification of their people, there would be a great alteration in the case under consideration. And if it be pretended, that such a liberty would produce greater diversity, yea, and confusion in the worship of God, we can only say, that it did not so of old, when the pastors of churches were left wholly to the exercise of their own gifts and abilities in all sacred administrations. But it is the making of an assent and consent unto it, with the constant use of it, or attendance unto it, a necessary condition of all communion with the church, which at present is called into question. It will not, we suppose, be denied, but that it is so made unto us all, both ministers and people; and that by such laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, as are sufficiently severe in their penalties: for we have rules and measures of church-communion assigned unto us, by laws merely civil. Were there any colour or pretence of denying this to be so, we should proceed no farther in this instance; but things are evidently and openly with us as here laid down. Now this condition of communion is unscriptural; and the making of it to be such a condition, is without warranty or countenance from the word of God, or the practice of the apostolical and primitive churches. That there are no footsteps of any liturgy, or prescribed forms for the administration of all church ordinances to be imposed on the disciples of Christ in their assemblies, to be found in the Scripture, no intimation of any such thing, no direction about it, no command for it, will, we suppose, be acknowledged. Commanded indeed we are to make prayers and supplications for all sorts of men in our assemblies, to instruct, lead, guide, and feed the flock of Christ,[h] to administer the holy ordinances instituted by him, and to do all these things decently and in order. The apostles also describing the work of the ministry in their own attendance unto it, affirm

[h] 1 Tim. ii. 1. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.

that they would 'give themselves continually unto prayer and the ministry of the word.'[i] But that all these things should be done (the preaching of the word only excepted) in and by the use or reading of a liturgy, and the prescribed forms of it, without variation or receding from the words and syllables of it in any thing, that the Scripture is utterly silent of. If any one be otherwise minded, it is incumbent on him to produce instances unto his purpose. But withal he must remember, that in this case it is required not only to produce a warranty from the Scripture for the use of such forms or liturgies, but also, that rules are given therein, enabling churches to make the constant attendance unto them, to be a necessary condition of their communion. If this be not done, nothing is offered unto the case as at present stated. And whatever confidence may be made use of herein, we know that nothing unto this purpose can be thence produced. It is pleaded, indeed, that our Saviour himself composed a form of prayer, and prescribed it unto his disciples: but it is not proved that he enjoined them the constant use of it in their assemblies, nor that they did so use it, nor that the repetition of it should be a condition of communion in them, though the owning of it as by him proposed, and for the ends by him designed, may justly be made so; least of all is it, or can it be proved, that any rule or just encouragement can hence be taken for other men, who are neither Jesus Christ nor his apostles, but weak and fallible as ourselves, to compose entire liturgies, and impose the necessary use of them in all the worship of the church.

Neither is there the least countenance to be obtained unto such impositions, from the practice or example of the first churches. Liturgies themselves were an invention of after ages, and the use of them now inquired after of a much later date. For those which pretend unto apostolical antiquity, have long since been convicted to be spurious and feigned: nor is there scarce any learned man who hath the confidence to assert them to be genuine, and on a supposition that so they are, no tolerable reason can be given why the use of them should be neglected, and such others taken up as are of a most uncertain original. The first condition

[i] Acts vi. 4.

therefore of communion proposed unto us is not only unscriptural, which is sufficient unto our present argument, but also destitute of any ancient example or usage among the churches of Christ, to give countenance unto it. This if we admit not of, if we attend not unto, we are not only refused communion in other things, but also excommunicated, or cast out of the whole communion of the church, as many are at this day; yet some are so, not only for refusing compliance with the whole of it in general, but for not observing every particular direction belonging unto it (as might be manifested in instances) of no great importance. If therefore any divisions or schisms do ensue among us on this account, that some indispensably require an assent and consent unto the liturgy, and all things contained in it, as the condition of complete church-communion, or a necessary attendance on the whole religious worship thereby performed, and therein prescribed, which others refuse to admit of as such, and thereon forbear the communion proposed unto them, it is evident from the rules laid down, where the guilt of them is to be charged. And we do not discourse of what any may do among themselves, judging it meet for their edification, nor of what a civil law may constitute with respect unto public places, employments, and preferments; but only where lies the sin and evil that attends divisions arising on these impositions, and which, by their removal, would be taken away. And there seems to be an aggravation of this disorder, in that not only all men are refused communion who will not submit unto these terms of it, but also, they are sought out and exposed unto severe penalties if they will not admit of them, though expressly contrary to their consciences and persuasions.

2. Canonical submission unto the present ecclesiastical government of the church, and the administration of the discipline thereof, in their hands by whom the power of it is possessed, with an acquiescency therein, are to the same purpose required of us, and expected from us. Who these are, and what are the ways and means of their administrations, we shall not repeat, as unwilling to give offence unto any. We cannot but know how, and in what sense these things are proposed unto us, and what is expected from us thereon. Neither dare we give another sense of them in our

minds, than what we judge to be the sense and intention of them who require our submission and obedience unto them. It is not certainly their design nor mind, that we should look on the offices of the church as unwarrantable, and on their rule as inconvenient, so as to endeavour a reformation in the one and of the other. It is such a conformity they intend, as whereby we do, virtually at least, declare our approbation of all these things in the church, and our acquiescency in them. Neither can we be admitted to put in any exception, nor discharge our consciences by a plain declaration of what we dislike or dissent from, or in what sense we can submit unto any of these things. We take it therefore for granted, that in the conformity required of us, we must cordially and sincerely approve the present ecclesiastical government, and the administration of church-discipline thereby. For it is the profession of our acceptance of it as proposed unto us; and if we acquiesce not therein, but express an uneasiness under it, we do it at the hazard of the reputation of our sincerity and honesty in conforming. Now this condition of communion with the church of England is also unscriptural, and consequently unlawful to be made so. This is by many now plainly acknowledged: for they say there is no government determined in the Scripture. But this now in force amongst us is erected by the authority of the magistrate, who hath supreme power in things ecclesiastical: and on that ground a lawful government they plead it to be, and lawful to be exercised, and so also by others to be submitted to. But we have now sundry times declared that this is not our present question. We inquire not whether it be lawful or no, or on what account it may be so esteemed, or how far it may be submitted unto, or wherein; but we say, the professed acknowledging of it with submission unto it, as the government of the church, is required of us as a necessary condition of our communion. If they are not so, give us liberty to declare our sense concerning it without prejudice: and if it be so, then may we refuse this condition as unscriptural. For in the case of conformity, there is not only a submission to the government required, but expressly (as was said) an approbation of it, that it is such as it ought to be. For in religious things our practice declares a cordial approbation, as being a part of our profession wherein we

ought to be sincere. Some again make some pleas, that bishops, and some government by them, are appointed by the apostles; and therefore a submission unto them may be justly required as a condition of communion. For we will not now dispute, but that whatever is so appointed may be so required; although we believe that every particular instance of this nature is not rigidly to be insisted on, if it belong not unto the essentials of the church, and it be dubious to some whether it be so appointed or no. But yet neither doth an admittance of this plea, give us any relief in this matter. For suppose it should or might be proved that there ought to be, according to the mind of Christ in all churches, bishops, with a pre-eminence above presbyters in order or degree, and that the rule of the church doth principally belong unto them that are so; yet will not this concession bear an application to the present question, so as to afford us any relief. For the granting of things so dubious and questionable, can never give them such an evidence of truth and firmitude in the church, as to warrant the making of them necessary conditions of communion unto all Christians. Neither doth it follow from any thing that pretendeth to fall under Scripture proof, that such bishops should be diocesan; that they should depend on archbishops over them; that they should assume the whole power of church-rule and discipline into their hands; that they should administer it by chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, and the like; that this should be done by presentments, or indictments, citations, processes, litigious pleadings, after the manner of secular or civil courts, to the exclusion of that rule and discipline which the gospel directs unto, with the management of it in love and brotherly compassion in the name and by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. But these things we shall not in particular insist upon, for the reason before given. This we must say, that take the whole of the government and the administration thereof together, which by the conformity required of us we must testify our approbation of, and acquiescence in, or we deal hypocritically with them that require it of us; and we know it to be so far unscriptural, as that an acknowledgment of it, and submission unto it, cannot duly and justly be made a necessary condition of communion unto us. It may be it will be said,

that submission unto the government of the church is not so much a condition of communion with it as it is that wherein our communion itself with it doth consist; and it is but a fancy to think of communion with a church without it. But this is otherwise; as appears in those churches where all rule and government being left in the hand of the civil magistrate, there communion is merely spiritual in the administration of evangelical ordinances. And might but that be admitted which nature, reason, the law of the Christian faith, and gospel obedience, do require, namely, that church-fellowship and communion be built upon men's own judgment and choice; and this would go a great way towards the pacification of our differences. But if this be so, and that all church-communion consists in submission to the government of it, or at least that it doth so principally, it becomes them by whom it is owned and avowed so to do, to take care that that government be derived from the authority of Christ, and administered according to his mind; or all church-communion, properly so called, will be overthrown.

3. We are required to use and observe the ceremonies in worship which the present church hath appointed, or doth use and observe. This also is made a necessary condition of communion unto us. For many are at this day actually cast out of all communion for not observing of them. Some are so proceeded against for not observing of holy days; some for not kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord's supper; some for not using the sign of the cross in baptism: and what would become of ministers that should neglect or omit to wear the surplice in sacred administrations, is easy to conjecture. But these things are all of them unwritten and unscriptural. Great and many indeed have been the disputes of learned men, to prove that although they have no divine institution, nor yet example of apostolical or primitive practice, yet that they may be lawfully used for decency and order in the worship of God. Whether they have evinced what they aimed at is as yet undetermined. But supposing in this case all to be as they would pretend, and plead that it should be, yet because they are all granted to be arbitrary inventions of men, and very few of those who make use of them are agreed what is their proper use and signification, or whether they have any

or no, they are altogether unmeet to be made a necessary condition of communion. For inquiry may be made, on what warranty, or by what rule they may be appointed so to be? Those who preside in and over the churches of Christ, do so in his name, and by his authority: and therefore they can impose nothing on them as a condition of their communion together but what his name is upon, or what they have his authority for: and it will be dangerous to set his seal unto our own appointments. For what men think meet to do themselves in the matters of the house of God and his worship, it may be measured and accepted with him according to their light and design: but for what they impose on others, and that under no less penalty than the deprivation of the outward administration of all the privileges procured for them by Jesus Christ, they ought to have his warrant and authority for. And their zeal is to be bewailed, who not only cast men out of all church-communion, so far as in them lieth, for a refusal to observe those voluntarily imposed ceremonies in sacred worship, but also prosecute them with outward force to the ruin of them and their families; and we cannot but wonder that any should as yet think meet to make use of prisons and the destruction of men thereby, as an appendix of their ecclesiastical discipline, exercised in the highest severity, on no greater occasions than the omission of the observance of these ceremonies. Whether such proceedings are measured by present interest, or the due consideration of what will be pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ at the last day, is not difficult to determine.

4. As we are ministers, there is in some cases required of us under the same penalty, an oath of canonical obedience. We need not labour to prove this to be unscriptural; nor, to avoid provocations, shall at present declare the rise, nature, and use of it, with the fierce digladiations that have formerly been about it. We can look upon it no otherwise, but as that which is contrary to the liberty, and unworthy of the office of a minister of the gospel.

We know not any thing else which is required of us unto the end mentioned, unless it be of some a subscription unto the articles of religion. And this, because the Scripture enjoins unto all a consent unto sound doctrine and a form of wholesome words, may be admitted so far as those articles

concern only points of faith; but whereas there is annexed unto them, and enjoined with other things, an approbation of all those instances of conditions of communion before insisted on, a subscription unto the whole becomes of the same nature with things themselves therein approved of.

These are the conditions of communion with the church of England, which are proposed unto us, and which we are indispensably to submit unto if we intend to be partakers thereof; and these are all that we know of that nature. That any of these are in particular prescribed in the word of God, much less that they can derive any warranty from thence to be made necessary conditions of church-communion, will not we suppose be pretended by any. If therefore any divisions do ensue on the refusal of some to admit of these conditions, the guilt of them cannot by any rule of Scripture, or from any example of the first churches, be charged on them who make that refusal. Other groundless accusations and charges we value not; for this is but man's day, the judgment whereof we neither stand nor fall unto. Yea, we esteem ourselves obliged, in all peaceableness and sobriety, to bear witness against such impositions, and unto that liberty wherewith the Lord Christ hath made his churches and disciples free. And if once things were come unto that state, that men would assign no other terms of church-communion than what Christ hath appointed, it would quickly appear where the guilt of our divisions would remain, if any such divisions would yet remain. But so long as there is a desire to make the wills and wisdoms of some men, fallible even as others, the rule and measure of obedience in spiritual things, an end of strife and contention among Christians will be expected in vain. And this we say with hearts in some measure sensible and pained, to see the body of Christ torn in pieces, by the lusts, passions, and carnal interests of men. Could we contribute any thing to the healing of the wounds and ruptures that are amongst Christians, provided it may have a consistency with the mind of Christ, and the duty we owe unto him (as indeed nothing else will really contribute any thing thereunto), we should with all readiness and faithfulness give up our best endeavours therein. And where we can do nothing else, we hope we shall bear with patience those disdainful reproaches

which the pride of men, blown up by a confluence of secular perishing advantages, prompts them to pour out upon us, for our non-compliance with their impositions.

Secondly, By the conformity required of us, we must consent unto the omission of sundry duties, which are made so unto us by the command and appointment of Jesus Christ. If we are at any time hindered in the discharge of any necessary duty by others, we have somewhat to plead in our own excuse: but if we ourselves voluntarily consent to the neglect or omission of them, we cannot avoid the guilt of sin. And the worst way whereby such a consent may be expressed, is by compact and agreement with others; as though it were in our power to bargain with other men, what duties we will observe, and what we will omit in the worship of God. Now in the conformity required of us, we are to give this consent, and that as it were by compact and agreement, which deprives us of all pretence of excuse in our omissions. It is no time afterward to plead that we would discharge such duties, were we not hindered or forbidden: we have ourselves antecedently and voluntarily renounced a concern in such forbidden duties. For no man can honestly conform, but it is with a declared resolution to accept of all the terms and consequents of it, with an approbation of them. Under this notion it is, that we look on conformity; and what others apprehend thereby, or understand therein, who seem to press men to conform unto what they do not approve, we know not. If then there be any omission of known duties inseparably accompanying our conformity, that thereby we solemnly consent unto.

This therefore we are obliged to refuse, because without sin, in the voluntary neglect and omission of duty, we cannot comply with it; which therefore can be no schism in us, nor what might in any way render us blameable. The Lord Christ hath prescribed no such law of unity and peace unto his churches, as that his disciples should be bound constantly to neglect any known duty, which they owe to himself, for their sakes. Nor do his institutions interfere, that the observance of any one should exclude a due attendance unto another. Neither doth he by his commands, bring any one into a necessity of doing that which is evil, or of omitting any thing that is required of him in the way of duty.

However, therefore, we value church-peace and union, we dare not purchase it by an abrenunciation of any duty we owe to Jesus Christ; nor would an agreement procured on such terms be of any use unto us, or of advantage to the church itself. Wherefore that compliance in church-communion which would be obstructive of any necessary duties, is not by the Lord Christ enjoined us, and therefore its omission cannot be culpable in us, but it would itself be our sin: especially would it be thus, where the duties so to be omitted, are such as are incumbent on us, by virtue of especial office, wherein we are peculiarly required to be faithful. It remaineth therefore only, that we declare wherein we should by conformity engage unto the omission of such duties as are indispensably required of us. And this we shall do in some few instances.

1. Every minister of the gospel hath, by the appointment of Jesus Christ, the whole immediate care of the flock, whereof he is overseer, committed unto him. That no part hereof which belongs unto their edification is exempted from him, the charge that is given unto him, and the account which will be expected from him, do sufficiently evidence. For as ministers are called overseers, rulers, guides, pastors, and the like; so are they commanded to feed the flock, to take the oversight of it, and to rule the house of God,[k] a discharge of all which must come into their account. Nor is there any word spoken in the whole Scripture, relating to the rule and government of the church, which is not spoken principally with respect unto them. Nor is there the least intimation of an exemption of any part of the discipline of the gospel, from their office or care. If it be pretended that there is, let the places be produced wherein such an exemption is made, or any instances of it among the first churches, and they shall be considered; for hitherto no such thing has been attempted that we know of. Nor is it at all concluded from the plea, that some are appointed unto a superior degree above others in the rule of the church. For a man may have the whole rule of his flock committed unto him, although he should be obliged to give an account unto others of his discharge thereof. It is therefore the duty of all ministers of the gospel, not only to teach, instruct, and

[k] Acts xx. 17. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 5. 1 Pet. v. 1—5. Heb. v. 17.

preach to their flocks, but to go before them also in rule and government, and in the exercise of the spiritual discipline appointed in the gospel, in the order wherein it is appointed for their edification. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed unto them, or they are not: if they are not, by what authority do they take upon them to open and shut in the house of God, in ministerial teaching, and authoritative administrations of sacred ordinances? For these things belong unto the authority which is given by Christ under that metaphorical expression of 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven;' the reason of the allusion and its application being obvious. And if these are not received by any, they are usurpers, if they undertake to administer unto the church authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ. If they are given or granted unto them, how may it be made to appear that they are so, for the ends mentioned only, but not for the rule and government of the church, which also belongs unto them? where is the exemption in the grant made to them? where are the limits assigned unto their power, that they shall exercise it in some concerns of the kingdom of heaven, but not in others? And whereas the greatest and most necessary parts of this power, such as are ministerial teaching, and the administrations of the sacraments, are confessedly committed unto them, how comes it to pass that the less should be reserved from them? For whereas the former are necessary to the very being of the church, the latter are esteemed by some scarcely to belong unto it. To say that bishops only receive these keys, and commit or lend the use of them to others, for such ends and purposes as they are pleased to limit, is both foreign to the Scripture, and destructive of all ministerial power. And if ministers are not the ministers of Christ, but of men; if they have not their authority from him, but from others; if that may be parcelled out unto them which they have from him, at the pleasure of any over them, there needs not much contending about them or their office.

Besides, the relation of these things one to another is such, as that if they were absolutely separated, their efficacy unto edification will be exceedingly impaired, if not destroyed. If those who have the dispensation of the word committed unto them, have not liberty and authority; if it be

not part of their office-duty to watch over them unto whom it is dispensed, and that accompanied with spiritual weapons, 'mighty through God,' towards the fulfilling of the obedience of some, and the 'revenging of disobedience,' in others; if they have no power to judge, admonish, or censure them that walk unanswerably to the doctrine of the gospel preached unto them, and whose profession they have taken upon them; they will be discouraged in the pursuit of their work, and the word itself be deprived of a helpful means appointed by Christ himself to further its efficacy. And those who shall content themselves with the preaching of the word only, without an inquiry after its success in the minds and lives of them that are committed to their charge, by virtue of that care and authoritative inspection which indeed belongs to their office, will find that as they do discharge but one part of their duty, so they will grow cold and languid therein also. And when there hath been better success, as there hath, where some against their wills have been hindered by power from the exercise of the charge laid on them by Christ in this matter, making up as they were able by private solicitude and persuasion, what they were excluded from attending unto in public ministerial acts, it hath been an effect of especial favour from God, not to be ordinarily expected on the account of any rule. And thence it is, that for the most part things openly and visibly do fall out otherwise; the people being little reformed in their lives, and preachers waxing cold and formal in their work. And if the censures of the church are administered by them who preach not the word unto the people, they will be weak and enervous as unto any influence on the consciences of men. Their minds indeed may be affected by them, so far as they are attended with outward penalties; but how little this tends unto the promotion of holiness, or the reformation of men's lives, experience doth abundantly testify. Church-discipline and censures are appointed merely and solely to second, confirm, and establish the word, and to vindicate it from abuse and contempt; as expressing the sense that Jesus Christ hath of them by whom it is received, and of them by whom it is despised. And it is the word alone which gives authority unto discipline and censures. Where therefore they are so separated, as that those by whom the

word is administered, are excluded from an interest in the exercise of discipline ; and those unto whom the administration of discipline is committed, are such as neither do, nor for the most part ought, to preach the word, it cannot be, but that the efficacy and success of them both will be impeded.

It is so also as to the administration of the Sacraments, especially that of the supper of the Lord. These are the principal mysteries of our religion, as to its external form and administration ; the sacred rites whereby all the grace, mercy, and privileges of the gospel, are sealed and confirmed unto them who are in a due manner made partakers of them. About them, therefore, and their orderly administration, did the primitive church always use their utmost care and diligence ; and these in an especial manner did they make use of, with respect unto them, to whom they were to be communicated. For they feared, partly, lest men should be made partakers of them to their disadvantage, being not so qualified as to receive them to their benefit ; as knowing that where persons through their own defaults obtain not spiritual profit by them, they are in no small danger of having them turned into a snare ; and partly, that these holy and sacred institutions themselves might neither be profaned, contaminated, nor exposed unto contempt. Hence, of those who gave up their names unto the church, and took upon them the profession of the gospel, the greatest part were continued for a long season under their care and inspection, but were not admitted into the society of the church in those ordinances, until upon good trial they were approved. And if any one after his admittance was found to walk unanswerably unto his profession, or to fall into any known sin, whence offence did ensue among the faithful, he was immediately dealt withal in the discipline of the church ; and in case of impenitency, separated from the congregation. Nor did the guides or pastors of the churches think they had any greater trust committed unto them than in this, that they should use their utmost care and diligence, that persons unmeet and unworthy might not be admitted into that church relation, wherein they should have a right to approach unto the table of the Lord ; and to remove from thence such as had demeaned themselves unworthy of that

communion. This they looked on as belonging unto their ministerial office, and as a duty required of them in the discharge thereof, by Jesus Christ. And herein they had sufficient direction, both in the rule of the word, as also in the nature of the office committed unto them, and of the work wherewith they were intrusted. For all ministers are stewards of the mysteries of Christ, of whom it is required that they should be faithful. Now as it belongs unto a faithful steward to distribute unto the household of his lord the provision which he hath made for them, and allows unto them, in due senson; so also to keep off those from partaking in them, who, without his master's order and warrant, would intrude themselves into his family, and unjustly possess themselves of the privileges of it. In these things doth the faithfulness of a steward consist. And the same is required in ministers of the gospel with respect unto the household of their Lord and Master, and the provision that he hath made for it. These therefore being undeniably parts of the duty of faithful pastors or ministers, it is evident how many of them we must solemnly renounce a concernment in, upon a compliance with the conformity, in matter and manner, required of us. Neither are these duties such as are of light importance; or such as may be omitted without any detriment unto the souls of men. The glory of Christ, the honour of the gospel, the purity of the church, and its edification, are greatly concerned in them. And they in whose minds a neglect of these things is countenanced by their attendance unto some outward forms and appearances of order, have scarcely considered him aright, with whom they have to do. Some therefore of these duties we shall instance in. First, It is the duty of all faithful ministers of the gospel, to consider aright who are so admitted into the church, as to obtain a right thereby unto a participation of all its holy ordinances. Take care they must, that none who have that right granted them by the law of Christ, be discouraged or excluded; nor any altogether unworthy admitted. And hereunto, as it is generally acknowledged, a credible profession of repentance, faith, and obedience, that is of those which are sincere and saving, is required. To neglect an inquiry after these things, in those that are to be admitted unto the table of the Lord, is to prostitute the holy ordi-

nances of the gospel unto contempt and abuse; and to run cross to the constant practice of the church in all ages, even under its greatest degeneracy. And the right discharge of this duty, if we may be allowed to be in earnest in spiritual things; if it be believed, that it is internal grace and holiness, for the sake whereof all outward administrations are instituted and celebrated, is of great weight and importance to the souls of men. For on the part of persons to be admitted, if they are openly and visibly unworthy, what do we thereby, but what lies in us to destroy their souls? It cannot be, but that their hardening and impenitency in sin will be hazarded thereby. For whereas they have granted unto them the most solemn pledge of the Lord Christ's acceptance of them, and of his approbation of their state towards God, that the church is authorized to give; what reason have they to think that their condition is not secure, or to attend unto the doctrine of the church, pressing them to look after a change and relinquishment of it? For although the administration of the sealing ordinances doth not absolutely set the approbation of Christ unto every individual person made partaker of them, yet it doth absolutely do so to the profession which they make. They witness in the name of Christ, his approbation of it, and therewithal of all persons according to their real interest in it, and answering of it. But those who in no considerable instances do answer this profession, can obtain nothing unto themselves but an occasion of hardening, and rendering them secure in a state of impenitency. For tell men whilst you please of the necessity of conversion to God, of reformation, and a holy life, yet if in the course of their unholiness, you confirm unto them the love of Christ, and give them pledges of their salvation by him, they will not much regard your other exhortations. And thence it is come to pass in the world, that the conformity (worth that we contend about ten thousand times over) which ought to be between the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the lives of them who are partakers of them, is for the most part lost. The word still declares, that without regeneration, without saving faith, repentance, and obedience, none can enter into the kingdom of God. In the administration of the other ordinances there is an abatement made

of this rigorous determination, and men have their salvation assured unto them without a credible profession, yea, or a pretence of these qualifications: and the lives of the most who live in the enjoyment of these things, seem to declare, that they neither believe the one, nor much regard the other.

In the mean time the church itself, as to its purity, and the holiness of its communion, is damaged by the neglect of a careful inspection into this duty. For it cannot be, but that ignorance, worldliness, and profaneness, will spread themselves as a leprosy over such a church; whence their communion will be of very little use and advantage unto believers. And hereby do churches, which should be the glory of Christ, by their expression of the purity, the holiness, and excellency of his person and doctrine, become the principal means and occasions of his dishonour in the world; and he that shall read that 'Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it withthe washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish;'[1] will be much to seek after the effects of this design of Christ in his love and death, if he measure them by what appears in churches under the power and influence of this neglect. Nor do those who plead for the continuance of things in such a state without reformation, sufficiently consider the representation that the Lord Christ made of himself, when he was about to deal with his churches, some of which were overtaken with carelessness and negligence in this matter. And yet hath he therein laid down a rule, as to what kind of proceedings particular churches are to expect from him in all generations. And it is a matter of no small amazement, that any churches dare approve and applaud themselves in such a state of impurity and defection, as is evidently condemned by him in those primitive patterns. Do men think he is changed, or that he will approve in them what he judged and condemned in others? or do they suppose he minds these things no more; and because he is unseen, that he seeth not? But we shall all find at length that he is 'the same yesterday, to-day,

[1] Eph. v. 25—27.

and for ever;' and that as the judge of all, he stands at the door.

Now this duty, by conformity, we renounce a concernment in, so as to attend unto it, by virtue of ministerial authority; whence the guilt of all the evil consequents thereof before mentioned, must fall on us. For it is known, that a mere shadow of the work of this duty, and not so much as a shadow of authority for it, would be left unto us; for what is allowed in case of a sudden emergency, upon an offence taken by the whole congregation at the wickedness of any (which is instructed beforehand that this ought to be no matter of offence unto them), as it may be it cannot be proved ever to have been observed in any one instance, so the allowed exercise of it would yield no relief in this case. And if any should extend the rule beyond the interpretation that is put upon it by the present current administration of church-discipline, there is no great question to be made what entertainment he would meet withal for his so doing. And it is to no purpose to come into the church, as it were on purpose to go out again. And if instead of dealing with the souls and consciences of men, in the name and authority of Christ, as stewards of his mysteries, and can content themselves to be informers of crimes unto others, we desire their pardon if we cannot comply with them therein. And this is the sum of what at present we are pleading about. It is the duty of ministers of particular churches, to judge and take care concerning the fitness of them, according unto the rule of the gospel and the nature of the duty required of them, who are to be admitted into the fellowship of the church, and thereby unto a participation of all the holy ordinances thereof. This charge the Lord Christ hath committed unto them, and hereof will require an account from them. Upon the neglect, or right discharge of this duty, consequents of great moment do depend; yea, the due attendance unto it hath a great influence into the preservation of the being of the church, and is the hinge whereon the well-being of it doth turn. But the power of exercising ministerial authority in a just attendance unto this duty, we must renounce in our conformity, if we should submit thereunto. For we have shewed before, that after we have conformed, we can pretend no excuse

from what is enjoined of us, or forbidden unto us by virtue thereof, all being founded in our own voluntary act and consent. Hence the guilt of this omission must wholly fall on us, which we are not willing to undergo.

There are we know many objections raised against the committing of this power and trust unto the ministers of particular congregations. Great inconveniences are pretended as the consequences of it. The ignorance and unfitness of most ministers for the discharge of such a trust, if it should be committed unto them, the arbitrariness and partiality which probably others will exercise therein, the yoke that will be brought on the people thereby, and disorder in the whole, are usually pleaded to this purpose, and insisted on.

But, 1. This trust is committed unto some or other by Christ himself, and it is necessary that so it should be. Never did he appoint, nor is it meet, nor was it ever practised in the primitive church, that every one should at his pleasure, on his own presumption, intrude himself into a participation of the holy things of the house of God. The consideration of men's habitations, with their age, and the like, are of no consideration with respect unto any rule of the gospel. Either therefore it must be left unto the pleasure and will of every man, be he never so ignorant, wicked, or profligate, to impose himself on the communion of any church of Christ, or there must be a judgment in the church concerning them who are to be admitted unto their communion.

2. From the first planting of the Christian religion, those who preached the gospel unto the conversion of the souls of men were principally intrusted with this power, and it was their duty to gather them who were so converted, into that church-order and fellowship, wherein they might partake of the sacred mysteries or solemn ordinances of the Christian worship. And this course of proceeding continued uninterrupted, with some little variation in the manner of the exercise of this power and duty, until corruption had spread itself over the face of the whole professing church in the world. But still a shadow and resemblance of it was retained, and in the papal church itself to this day, particular confessors are esteemed competent judges of the meetness

of their penitents for an admission unto the sacraments of their church. And who shall now be esteemed more meet for the discharge of this duty, than those who succeed in the office and work of preaching the word, whereby men are prepared for church-society? And as it is a thing utterly unheard of in antiquity, that those who dispensed the word unto the illumination and conversion of men, should not have the power of their disposal as to their being added to the church, or suspended for a time, as there was occasion; so it is as uncouth, that those who now sustain the same place and office unto several congregations attending on their ministry, should be deprived of it.

3. If there be that ignorance and disability in ministers as is pretended, the blame of it reflects on them by whom they are made. And we are not obliged to accommodate any of the ways or truths of Christ unto the sins and ignorance of men. And if they are insufficient for this work, how come they to be so sufficient for that which is greater; namely, to divide the word aright unto all their hearers? But we speak of such ministers as are competently qualified according to the rule of the gospel, for the discharge of their office; and no other ought there to be. And such there are, blessed be God, through the watchful care of our Lord Jesus Christ over his church, and his supplies of the gifts of his Spirit unto them. And such as these know it is their duty to study, meditate, pray, ask counsel and advice of others, perhaps of more wisdom and experience than themselves, that they may know how in all things to behave themselves in the house of God. Nor will God be wanting unto them who in sincerity seek direction from him, for the discharge of any duty which he calls them unto. Other security of regular, orderly, and useful proceedings in this matter, Christ hath not given us; nor do we need: for the due observance of his appointments will not fail the attaining of his ends; which ought to be ours also.

4. The judgment and acting of the church-officers in the admission of persons into the complete society of the faithful, is not arbitrary, as is pretended. They have the rule of the Scripture, which they are diligently to attend unto. This is the entire rule which the Lord Christ hath left unto his church, both for their doctrine and discipline: whatever is beyond

this, or beside it, is not his, nor owned by him. What is not done according to this rule, is of no force in the consciences of men, though it may stand, until lawfully recalled, for the preservation of outward order. And whatever arbitrariness may be supposed, in making a judgment upon the rule of the word, or in the application of its rule untothe present case, it must abide in some or other. And who shall be thought more meet or able to make a right determination thereon, than those whose duty it is, and who have the advantage to be acquainted with all circumstances belonging to the case proposed? Besides, there is the judgment of the church, or the congregation itself, which is greatly to be regarded. Even in the church of England a suspension of any from the Lord's supper is allowed unto the curate, upon the offence of the congregation; which is a sufficient evidence that a judgment in this case is owned to be their due: for none can take offence, but upon a judgment of the matter at which he is offended; nor in this case, without a right to determine that some offences ought to debar persons from a participation of the holy ordinances; as also what those offences are. This therefore is to be considered as an aid and assistance unto ministers in the discharge of their duty. It is the church into whose communion persons are to be admitted. And although it be no way necessary, that determinations in this case should be always made by suffrage, or a plurality of votes in the body of the church; yet if the sense or mind of the congregation may be known, or is so (upon the inquiry that ought to be made unto that purpose), that any persons are unmeet for their communion, it is not convenient they should be received; nor will their admission in this case be of any advantage to themselves or the church. The light of reason, and the fundamental constitutive principles of all free societies, such as the church is, ascribe this liberty unto it; and the primitive church practised accordingly:[m] so also is the judgment and desire of the congregation to be considered in the admission of any, if they are made known to the guides of it. For it is expected from them they should confirm their love unto them without dissimulation, as members of the same body; and therefore in

[m] Acts ix. 26—28. Rom. xiv. 1.

their approbation of what is done, their rulers have light and encouragement in their own duty. Besides, there is appointed, and ought to be preserved, a communion among churches themselves: by virtue hereof, they are not only to make use of mutual aid, advice, and counsel, antecedently unto actings of importance; but each particular church is upon just demand to give an account unto other churches of what they do in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel among them; and if in any thing it hath mistaken or miscarried, to rectify them upon their advice and judgment. And it were easy to manifest how, through these means and advantages, the edification of the church and the liberty of Christians is sufficiently secured, in that discharge of duty which is required in the pastors of the churches, about the admission of persons unto a participation of holy ordinances in them.

5. This duty therefore, must either be wholly neglected, which will unavoidably tend to the corrupting and debauching of all churches, and in the end unto their ruin; or it must be attended unto by each particular church under the conduct of their guides and rulers; or some others must take it upon themselves. What hath been the issue of a supposal, that it may be discharged in the latter way, is too well known to be insisted on: for whilst those who undertake the exercise of church power are such as do not dispense the word, or preach it unto them towards whom it is to be exercised, but are strangers unto their spiritual state, and all the circumstances of it; whilst they have no way to act or exercise their presumed authority, but by citations, processes, informations, and penalties, according to the manner of secular courts of judicature in causes civil and criminal; and whilst the administration of it is committed unto men utterly unacquainted with, and unconcerned in, the discipline of the gospel, or the preservation of the church of Christ in purity and order; and whilst herein many, the most, or all of them are so employed, have thereby outward emoluments and advantages, which they do principally regard; the due and proper care of the right order of the churches, unto the glory of Christ, and their own edification, is utterly omitted and lost. It is true, many think this the

only decent, useful, and expedient way for the government of the church, and think it wondrous unreasonable that others will not submit thereunto, and acquiesce therein. But what would they have us do? or what is it that they would persuade us unto? Is it that this kind of rule in and over the church, hath institution given it in the Scripture, or countenance from apostolical practice? Both they and we know that no pretence of any such plea can be made. Is it that the first churches after the apostles, or the primitive church, did find such a kind of rule to be necessary, and therefore erected it among themselves? There is nothing more remote from truth. Would they persuade us, that as ministers of the gospel, and such as have, or may have, the care of particular churches committed unto us, that we have no such concernment in these things, but what we may solemnly renounce and leave them wholly to the management of others? We are not able to believe them. The charge that is given unto us, the account that will be required of us, the nature of the office we are called unto, continually testify other things unto us. Wherefore we dare not voluntarily engage into the neglect or omission of this duty, which Christ requireth at our hands, and of whose neglect we see so many sad consequents and effects. The Lord Christ we know hath the same thoughts, and makes the same judgment of his churches, as he did of old, when he made a solemn revelation and declaration of them: and then we find that he charged the failings, neglects, and miscarriages of the churches principally upon the angels or ministers of them. And we would not willingly, by our neglect, render ourselves obnoxious unto his displeasure, nor betray the churches whereunto we do relate, unto his just indignation, for their declension from the purity of his institutions, and the vigour of that faith and love, which they had professed. We should moreover by the conformity required of us, and according to the terms on which it is proposed, engage ourselves against the exercise of our ministerial office and power, with respect unto them who are already members of particular churches. For this we carry along with us, that by conforming we voluntarily consent unto the whole state of conformity, and unto all that we are to do, or not to do, by the law thereof. Now it is not to be

expected that all who are duly initiated or joined unto any church, shall always walk blameless according unto the evangelical rule of obedience, without giving offence unto others. The state of the church is not like to be so blessed in this world, that all who belong unto it should be constantly and perpetually inoffensive. This indeed is the duty of all, but it will fall out otherwise. It did so amongst the primitive churches of old, and is not therefore otherwise to be expected amongst us, on whom the ends of the world are come, and who are even pressed with the decays and ruins of it. Many hypocrites may obtain an admission into church societies, by the strictest rules that any can proceed upon therein: and these, after they have known and professed the ways of righteousness, may, and often do, turn aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them, and fall again into the pollutions of the world. Many good men, and really sincere believers, may, through the power of temptations, be surprised into faults and sins, scandalous to the gospel, and offensive to the whole congregation whereof they are members. Hath the Lord Christ appointed no relief in and for his churches in such cases? no way whereby they may clear themselves from a participation in such impieties, or deliver themselves from being looked on as those who give countenance unto them, as they who continue in this communion may and ought to be? no power whereby they may put forth from among them the old leaven which would otherwise infect the whole? no way to discharge themselves and their societies of such persons as are impenitent in their sins? no means for the awakening, conviction, humiliation, and recovery of them that have offended? no way to declare his mind and judgment in such cases, with the sentence that he denounceth in heaven against them that are impenitent?[n] If he hath done none of these things, it is evident, that no churches in this world can possibly be preserved from disorder and confusion. Nor can they by love and the fruits of a holy communion be kept in such a condition, as wherein he can be pleased with them, or continue to walk amongst them. For let men please themselves whilst they will with the name of the church, it is no otherwise

[n] 1 Cor. v. 1. 6, 7. 2 Cor. ii. 6. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Matt. xvi. 18. xviii. 15—20. Rev. ii. 2.

with them, where persons obstinately and impenitently wicked, and whose lives are wholly discrepant from the rule of the gospel, are suffered to abide without control. But if he hath made the provision inquired after in this case, as it is evident that he hath, both the authority he hath granted unto his church for these ends, his commands to exercise it with care and watchfulness, with the rules given them to proceed by, with the known end of all instituted churches for the promotion of holiness, being all open and plain in the Scripture; it must then be inquired, unto whom this trust is firstly committed, and of whom these duties are principally required.

For private members of the church, what is their duty, and the way how they may regularly attend unto the discharge of it according to the mind of Christ, in case of scandalous sins and offences among them, they are so plainly and particularly laid down and directed, as that setting aside the difficulties that are cast on the rule herein, by the extremely forced and unprovable exceptions of some interested persons; that none can be ignorant of what is required of them, Matt. xviii. 15—20. And a liberty to discharge their duty herein, they are bound by the law of Christ in due order to provide for. If they are abridged hereof, and deprived thereby of so great a means of their own edification, as also of the usefulness required in them towards the church whereof they are members, it is a spiritual oppression that they suffer under. And where it is voluntarily neglected by them, not only the guilt of their own, but of other men's sins also lies upon them. Neither is their own guilt small herein; for suffering sin to abide on a brother without reproof, is a fruit of hatred in the interpretation of the law; and this hatred is a sin of a heinous nature, in the sense of the gospel.[o] The duty also of the whole church in such cases is no less evidently declared. For from such persons as walk disorderly, and refuse to reform, on due admonition, they are to withdraw, and to put from amongst them such obstinate offenders; as also previously thereunto, to 'watch diligently lest any root of bitterness spring up among them, whereby they might be defiled.' And hereunto also are subservient all the commands that are given them to exhort and admonish one an-

[o] Lev. xix. 17. 1 John ii. 9, 10. iii. 15.

other, that the whole church may be preserved in purity, order, holiness, and faithfulness. But the chief inquiry is, With whom rests the principal care and power, according to the mind of Christ, to see the discipline of the church in particular congregations exercised, and to exercise it accordingly? If this should be found to be in the ministers, and through their neglect in the administration of it, offenders be left in their sins and impenitency, without a due application of the means for their healing and recovery; if the church itself come to be corrupted thereby, and to fall under the displeasure of Jesus Christ; as these things, in one degree or other, more or less, will ensue on that neglect, it will not turn unto their comfortable account at the great day. That this is their duty, that this authority and inspection is committed unto them, the reasons before insisted on, in the case of admission, do undeniably evince. And if those ministers who do conscientiously attend unto the discharge of their ministerial office towards particular flocks, would but examine their own hearts by the light of open and plain Scripture testimonies, with the nature of their office, and of the work they are engaged in, there would need little arguing to convince them of what trust is committed unto them, or what is required from them. If the consciences of others are not concerned in these things, if they have no light into the duty which seems to be incumbent on them; their principles and practices, or as we think mistakes and neglects, can be no rule unto us. What we may be forbidden, what we may be hindered in, is of another consideration. But for us voluntarily to engage unto the omission of that duty, which we cannot but believe that it will be required of us, is an evil which we are every way obliged to avoid.

There are also sundry particular duties, relating unto these that are more general, which in like manner, on the terms of communion proposed unto us, must be foregone and omitted. And where by these means or neglects some of the principal ways of exercising church-communion are cast out of the church, some of the means of the edification of its members are wholly lost, and sundry duties incumbent on them are virtually prohibited unto them, until they are utterly grown into disuse, it is no wonder if in such churches

where these evils are inveterate and remediless, particular persons do peaceably provide for their own edification by joining themselves unto such societies as wherein the rule of the gospel is more practically attended unto. It is taken for granted that the church is not corrupted by the wicked persons that are of its communion; nor its administrations defiled by their presence and communication in them; nor the edification of others prejudiced thereby, because it hath been so said by some of the ancients; though whether suitably unto the doctrine of the apostles[p] or no, is very questionable. But suppose this should be so; yet where wicked persons are admitted, without distinction or discrimination, unto the communion of the church where they are tolerated therein, without any procedure with them or against them, contrary to express rules of the Scripture given to that purpose; so that those who are really pious among them can by no means prevail for the reformation of the whole, they may, not only without breach of charity, impairing of faith or love, or without the least suspicion of the guilt of schism, forsake the communion of such a congregation, to join unto another, where there is more care of piety, purity, and holiness; but if they have any care of their own edification, and a due care of their salvation, they will understand it to be their duty so to do.

And we may a little touch hereon once for all. The general end of the institution of churches, as such, is the visible management of the enmity on the part of the seed of the woman, Christ the head, and the members of his body mystical, against the serpent and his seed. In the pursuit of this end, God ever had a church in the world, separate from persons openly profane, doing the work of the devil their father. And there is nothing in any church-constitution which tends unto, or is compliant with, the mixing and reconciling these distinct seeds, whilst they are such, and visibly appear so to be. And therefore as the types, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament, did declare that when all things were actually brought unto a head in Christ Jesus, the churches and all things that belong unto it should be holy; that is, visibly so; so the description generally, and uniformly given us of the churches of the

[p] 1 Cor. v. 6. 9, 10. 2 Thess. iii. 6.

New Testament, when actually called and erected, is, that they consisted of persons called, sanctified, justified, ingrafted into Christ;[q] or saints, believers, faithful ones, purified and separate unto God.[r] Such they professed themselves to be, such they were judged to be by them that were concerned in their communion; and as such they engage themselves to walk in their conversation. By what authority so great a change should be now wrought in the nature and constitution of churches, that it should be altogether indifferent of what sort of persons they do consist, we know not. Yea, to speak plainly, we greatly fear that both the worship and worshippers are defiled,[s] where open impenitent sinners are freely admitted unto all sacred administrations, without control. And we are sure, that as God complaineth that his sanctuary is polluted, when there are brought into it, 'strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh;'[t] so the true members of the church are warned of the evil and dangers of such defiling mixtures, and charged to watch against them.[u]

We might yet farther insist on the great evil it would be in us, if we should give a seeming outward approbation unto those things, and their use, which we cannot but condemn, and desire to have removed out of the worship of God. And moreover, there is, as we believe, an obligation upon us, to give a testimony unto the truth about the worship of God in his church, and not absolutely to hide the light we have received therein under a bushel. Nor would we render the reformation of the church absolutely hopeless, by our professed compliance with the things that ought to be reformed. But what hath been pleaded already is sufficient to manifest that there neither is, nor can be, a guilt of schism charged either on ministers or people who withhold themselves from the communion of that church, or those churches, whereof the things mentioned are made conditions necessary and indispensable; and that wherein they must be denied the liberty of performing many duties made necessary unto them by the command of Jesus Christ. And as the rigid imposition of unscriptural conditions of communion is the principal cause of all the schisms

[q] Isa. xxvi. 2. Ezek. xliii. 12. xliv. 9.
[r] Levit. xi. 44. Rom. i. 6. 1 Cor. i. 1, 2. xii. 13. Phil. i. 4. Col. ii. 11.
[s] 2 Tim. ii. 22. [t] Ezek. xliv. 7. [u] 1 Cor. v. 6. Heb. xii. 15, 16.

and divisions that are among us; so let them be removed and taken out of the way, and we doubt not, but that among all that sincerely profess the gospel, there may be that peace, and such an agreement obtained, as in observance whereof, they may all exercise those duties of love, which the strictest union doth require. These we profess ourselves ready for, so far as God shall be pleased to help us in the discharge of our duty; as also to renounce every principle or opinion whereof we may be convinced that they are in the least opposite unto, or inconsistent with, the royal law of love, and the due exercise thereof. If men will continue to charge, accuse, or revile us, either out of a causeless distaste against our persons, or misunderstanding of our principles and ways, or upon uncertain reports, or merely prompted thereunto through a vain elation of mind arising from the distance wherein, through their secular advantages, they look upon us to stand from them; as we cannot help it, so we shall endeavour not to be greatly moved at it: for it is known, that this hath been the lot and portion of those who have gone before us, in the profession of the gospel, and sincere endeavours to vindicate the worship of God from the disorders and abuses that have been introduced into it; and probably will be theirs who shall come after us. But the whole of our care is, that 'in godly simplicity and sincerity we may have our conversation in the world, not corrupting the word of God, nor using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as becomes the servants of God.'

But perhaps it will yet be pleaded, that this is not the whole which we are charged withal: for it is said that we do not only withdraw ourselves from the communion of the church of England, but also that we assemble in separate congregations for the celebration of the whole worship of God, whereby we evidently make a division in the church, and contract unto ourselves the guilt of schism; for what can there be more required thereunto. But what would those who make use of this objection have us to do? would they have us starve our souls, by a wilful neglect of the means appointed for their nourishment? or would they have us live in a constant omission of all the commands of Christ? By them, or those whose cause they plead, we are

cast out and excluded from church-communion with them, by the unscriptural conditions of it which they would force upon us. The distance between us that ensues hereon, they are the causes of, not we; for we are ready to join with them, or any others, upon the terms of Christ and the gospel. And do they think it meet that we should revenge their fault upon ourselves, by a voluntary abstinence from all the ways and means of our edification? Doth any man think that Jesus Christ leaves any of his disciples unto such a condition, as wherein it is impossible they should observe his commands and institutions without sin? That we should join in some societies, that in them we should assemble together for the worship of God in him, and that we should in him do and observe whatever he hath appointed, we look upon as our indispensable duty, made so unto us by his commands. These things, say some, you shall not do with us, if you will do no more; and if you do them among yourselves, you are schismatics. But this is a severity, which we know we shall not meet with at the last day. We stand at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

It will, it may be, be demanded, by what warrant or authority we do assemble ourselves in church societies for the administration of gospel ordinances; and who gave us this authority? We answer, That it is acknowledged there is a difference between them and us, so that with them we cannot enjoy the worship of God. But of this difference we are not the cause, nor do give occasion to any blameable divisions by our principles or practices. Where the cause is found, there the guilt remains. This being the state of things with us, it is fond to imagine that any professors of the gospel do absolutely want a warranty or authority to obey Jesus Christ, to observe his commands, and to serve him according to his revealed will. His command in his word, his promise of the acceptance of them, and of his presence among them in all the acts of their holy obedience, the assistance and guidance of his Holy Spirit, which he affords graciously unto them, are a sufficient warranty and authority for what they do in express compliance with his commands, and more they will not plead a power for. Where the Spirit and word of Christ are, there is his authority. And this is no otherwise committed unto men, but to enable

them to act obediently towards him, and ministerially towards others. And were church actings considered more with respect unto the obedience that in them is performed unto Christ, which is their first and principal consideration, it would quickly be evident whence men might have authority for their performance. And by the same means are we directed in their order and manner. Besides, the ministers who go before the people in their assemblies, are all of them (so far as we know) solemnly set apart unto their office and work, according unto what Christ hath appointed; and their duty it is to teach unto all men the good ways of Christ, and to go before them who are convinced and persuaded by them in their practice. These things hath their Lord and Master required of them, and an account concerning them will he call them unto at the last day. A dispensation is committed unto them, and a necessity is thence incumbent on them to preach the gospel; and who shall excuse them if they neglect so to do? For that all those who are ministers of the gospel are called to preach the gospel, and that diligently, every one, according as he hath received the gift of the grace of God, is out of question with them that do believe the gospel: and of the stewardship which is committed unto them herein, are they to give an account. And we do know that 'it is a fearful thing' for sinners, that is, wilful neglectors of his commands, 'to fall into the hands of the living God. Our Lord Jesus Christ also hath testified beforehand, that 'he who setteth his hand to this plough, and look backs again, is not fit for the kingdom of God.' He alone who calls them to this work can discharge them of it, and that either by the rule of his word, or his providence. And when men are invincibly hindered, as many are at this day, it is their suffering, but not their sin. Otherwise none can absolve them from the duty they owe to Jesus Christ in this matter, and that debt which they owe to the souls of men, in undertaking the work of the ministry. Some indeed suppose, or pretend to suppose, that a prohibition given them by superiors, forbidding them to preach, though not by nor according unto any rule of the gospel, doth discharge them from any obligation so to do, that it shall be no more their duty. It would do so no doubt, had they received no other command to preach the

gospel, nor from any other authority, than that of and from those superiors by whom they are forbidden; but being persuaded that they have so from him who is higher than the highest, they cannot acquiesce in this discharge, nor being 'bought with a price' can they now be servants of men.' But by whom are they thus forbidden to preach? It will be supposed, that the church which differs from them, and which originally makes itself a part in these differences, by the conditions of communion which it would impose upon them, is no competent judge in this case: nor will their prohibitions, who apparently thereby revenge their own quarrel, influence the consciences of them that dissent from them. For we speak not of what will or may take place, but what the consciences of men will or may be concerned in. By the civil magistrate they are not forbidden to preach, that we know of: it is true, they are prohibited to preach in the legal public meeting-places or churches; and these places being in the power and care of the magistrate, it is meet his terms and conditions of their use should be accepted of, or his prohibition observed, or his penalty quietly undergone, where a peaceable occasion is made use of contrary unto it. As to other places, ministers are not absolutely forbid to preach in them, no such power is as yet assumed or exercised; only the manner of assemblies for sacred worship, and the number of them that may assemble, are regulated by laws for secular ends, or civil security; and that under express penalties incurred on a contrary practice. But the consciences of ministers cannot be concerned in such laws, so far as to be exempted by them from the obligation that lies upon them from the command of Christ to preach the gospel. This they are commanded by him to do, and others know the penalties from men, under the danger whereof they must attend unto them. Besides, the reason of these legal prohibitions, so far as they do extend, are taken from civil considerations alone, namely, of the peace and quiet of the nation; and not from any Scripture or religious rules. And were these prohibitions only temporary or occasional, suited unto such emergencies as may give countenance unto their necessity, there might be a proportionable compliance with them. But whereas they respect all times alike, it is no doubt incumbent on them who

act any thing contrary unto such prohibitions, to secure their own consciences, that they no way interfere with the intention and end of the law, by giving the least countenance or occasion unto civil disturbances; and others also, by their peaceable deportment in all they do. But whereas they have received a talent from the Lord Christ to trade withal, have accepted of his terms, and engaged into his service without any condition of exception in case of such prohibitions, it is not possible they should satisfy their consciences in desisting from their work on such occurrences, any farther than in what they must yield unto outward force and necessity. It is pretended by some, that if such a legal prohibition were given unto all the ministers of the gospel, it would not be obligatory unto them: for if it should be so esteemed, it were in the power of any supreme magistrate lawfully to forbid the whole work of preaching the gospel unto his subjects; which is contrary to the grant made by God the Father unto Jesus Christ, that 'all nations shall be his inheritance,' and the commission he gave thereon unto his apostles, to 'teach all nations,' and to 'preach the gospel to every creature' under heaven. But it being some only that are concerned in this prohibition, it is their duty for peace sake, to acquiesce in the will of their superiors therein, whilst there are others sufficient to carry on the same work. That peace is or may be secured on other terms, hath been already declared. But that one man's liberty to attend unto his duty, and his doing it accordingly, should excuse another from that which is personally incumbent on himself, is a matter not easily apprehended, nor can be readily digested. Besides, what is pretended of the sufficient number of preachers without any contribution of aid from the nonconformists, is indeed but pretended: for if all that are found in the faith, gifted and called to the work of the ministry in these nations, were equally encouraged unto and in their work, yet would they not be able to answer the necessities of the souls of men requiring an attendance unto it in a due measure and manner; and those who have exercised themselves unto compassionate thoughts towards the multitudes of poor sinners in these nations, will not be otherwise minded. Wherefore these things being premised, we shall shut up these discourses with a brief answer unto

the foregoing objection which was the occasion of them. And we say,

1. That schism being the name of a sin, or somewhat that is evil; it can in no circumstances be any man's duty. But we have manifested as satisfactorily unto our own consciences, so we hope unto the minds of unprejudiced persons, that in our present condition, our assemblies for the worship of God are our express duty, and so can have no affinity with any sin or evil. And those who intend to charge us with schism in or for our assemblies, must first prove them not to be our duty.

2. Notwithstanding them, or any thing by us performed in them, we do preserve our communion entire with the church of England (that is, all the visible professors of the gospel in this nation), as it is a part of the catholic church, in the unity of the faith owned therein, provided it be not measured by the present opinions of some who have evidently departed from it. Our non-admittance of the present government and discipline of the church, as apprehended national, and as it is in the hands of merely ecclesiastical persons, or such as are pretended so to be, we have accounted for before. But we are one with the whole body of the professors of the Protestant religion, in a public avowment of the same faith.

3. Into particular churches we neither are, nor can be admitted, but on those terms and conditions, which not only we may justly, but which we are bound in a way of duty, to refuse. And this also hath been pleaded before. Besides, no man is so obliged unto communion with any particular or parochial church in this nation, but that it is in his own power at any time to relinquish it, and to secure himself also from all laws which may respect that communion, by the removal of his habitation. It is therefore evident, that we never had any relation unto any parochial church but what is civil and arbitrary, a relinquishment whereof is practised at pleasure every day by all sorts of men. Continuing therefore in the constant profession of the same faith with all other Protestants in the nation, and the whole body thereof, as united in the profession of it under one civil or political head; and having antecedently no evangelical obligation upon us unto local communion in

the same ordinances of worship numerically with any particular or parochial church; and being prohibited from any such communion by the terms, conditions, and customs indispensably annexed unto it by the laws of the land and the church, which are not lawful for us to observe, being Christ's freemen; it being moreover our duty to assemble ourselves in societies for the celebration of the worship of God in Christ, as that which is expressly commanded; we are abundantly satisfied, that however we may be censured, judged, or condemned by men, in and for what we do, yet that he doth both accept us here, and will acquit us hereafter, whom we serve and seek in all things to obey. Wherefore we are not convinced that any principle or practice which we own or allow, is in any thing contrary to that love, peace, and unity which the Lord Christ requireth to be kept and preserved among his disciples, or those that profess faith in him, and obedience unto him according to the gospel. We know not any thing in them but what is consistent and compliant with that evangelical union which ought to be in and among the churches of Christ, the terms whereof we are ready to hold and observe even with them that in sundry things differ from us; as we shall endeavour also to exercise all duties of the same love, peaceableness, and gentleness towards them by whom we are hated and reviled.

TRUTH AND INNOCENCE

VINDICATED:

IN

A SURVEY OF A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY;

AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE OVER THE CONSCIENCES OF SUBJECTS IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

Non partum studiis agimur; sed sumsimus arma,
Consiliis inimica tuis, discordia vœcors.

Οὐδὲν ἄτερ γραφῆς.—Clemens Alexand.

A

SURVEY OF A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

Review of the preface.

AMONG the many disadvantages, which those who plead in any sense for liberty of conscience are exposed unto, it is not the least, that in their arguings and pleas they are enforced to admit a supposition, that those whom they plead for, are indeed really mistaken in their apprehensions about the matters concerning which they yet desire to be indulged in their practice. For unless they will give place to such a supposition, or if they will rigidly contend that what they plead in the behalf of is absolutely the truth, and that obedience thereunto is the direct will and command of God, there remains no proper field for the debate about indulgence to be managed in. For things acknowledged to be such are not capable of an indulgence, properly so called; because the utmost liberty that is necessary unto them, is their right and due in strict justice and law. Men therefore in such discourses, speak not to the nature of the things themselves, but to the apprehensions of them with whom they have to do. But yet against this disadvantage, every party which plead for themselves are relieved by that secret reserve that they have in the persuasion of the truth and goodness of what they profess, and desire to be indulged in the practice of. And this also, as occasion doth offer itself, and in defence of themselves from the charge of their adversaries, they openly contend and avow. Neither was it judged formerly, that there was any way to deprive them of this reserve and relief, but by a direct and particular debate of the matters specially in difference, carried on unto their conviction by evidence of truth, managed from the common principles of it. But after trial made, this way to convince men of their errors and mistakes, who stand in need

of indulgence with respect unto the outward administration of the powers that they are under, is found, as it should seem, tedious, unreasonable, and ineffectual. A new way therefore to this purpose is fixed on, and it is earnestly pleaded, that there needs no other argument or medium to prove men to be mistaken in their apprehensions, and to miscarry in their practice of religious duties, than that at any time, or in any place, they stand in need of indulgence. To dissent, at all adventures, is a crime; and he whom others persecute, tacitly at least, confesseth himself guilty. For it is said, that the law of the magistrate being the sole rule of obedience in religious worship; their non-compliance with any law by him established, evidencing itself in their desire of exemption, is a sufficient conviction, yea, a self-acknowledgment not only of their errors and mistakes in what they apprehend of their duty in these things, and of their miscarriages in what they practise, but also that themselves are persons turbulent and seditious in withdrawing obedience from the laws which are justly imposed on them. With what restrictions and limitations, or whether with any or no, these assertions are maintained, we shall afterward inquire.

The management of this plea (if I greatly mistake him not), is one of the principal designs of the author of that discourse, a brief survey whereof is here proposed. The principle which he proceeds herein upon, himself it seems knew to be novel and uncouth, and therefore thought it incumbent on him, that both the manner of its handling, and the other principles that he judged meet to associate with it, or annex unto it, should be of the same kind and complexion. This design hath at length produced us this discourse; which, of what use it may prove to the church of God, what tendency it may have to retrieve or promote love and peace among Christians, I know not. This I know, that it hath filled many persons of all sorts with manifold surprisals, and some with amazement. I have therefore on sundry considerations, prevailed with myself much against my inclinations, for the sake of truth and peace, to spend a few hours in the examination of the principal parts and seeming pillars of the whole fabric. And this I was in my own mind the more easily induced unto, because there is no

concernment either of the church or state in the things here under debate, unless it be, that they should be vindicated from having any concern in the things and opinions here pleaded and argued. For as to the present church, if the principles and reasonings here maintained and managed, are agreeable unto her sentiments, and allowed by her; yet there can be no offence given in their examination, because she hath nowhere yet declared them so to be. And the truth is, if they are once owned and espoused by her, to the ends for which they are asserted, as the Christians of old triumphed in the thoughts of him who first engaged in ways of violence against them among the nations in the world, so the nonconformists will have no small relief to their minds in their sufferings, when they understand these to be the avowed principles and grounds on which they are to be persecuted and destroyed. And for the power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction belonging to the kings of this nation, as it hath been claimed and exercised by them in all ages since the establishment of Christian religion among us, as it is declared in the laws, statutes, and customs of the kingdom, and prescribed unto an acknowledgment in the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, it hath not the least concern in the matter here in question; yea, it is allowed, acknowledged, and pleaded for, by those whom this author designs to oppose. Whatever then shall be spoken of this subject, it is but a bare ventilation of private opinions; and those such, as which if one doctor's judgment may advance into the reputation of probability, so that some may venture to act upon them, yet are they not so far thereby secured as to have sanctuary given them, even from private men's examinations. Herein then I suppose, a liberty may be exercised without just offence to any; and our disquisition after the truth of the principles and theorems that will come under consideration, may be harmlessly accompanied with a moderate plea in the behalf of their innocency who are invidiously traduced, contemptuously reproached, unduly charged and calumniated, beyond, I am sure, any ordinary examples or presidents among men of any sort, rank, degree, difference, or profession in the world. Yea, this seems to be called for, by the light and law of nature, and to be useful, yea, needful to public tranquillity, beyond what in this present hasty review shall be attempted.

For the author of this discourse, he is to me utterly unknown; neither do I intend either to make any inquiry after him, or hastily to fix a credit unto any reports concerning either who he is, or of what consideration in the world. I am not concerned to know, what it seems he was concerned to conceal. Nor do I use to consider reasons, arguments, or writings under a relation to any persons, which contributes nothing to their worth or signification. Besides, I know how deceitful reports are in such matters and no way doubt, but that they will betray persons of an over-easy credulity into those mistakes about the writer of this survey, which he is resolved to avoid with reference to the author of the discourse itself. Only the character that in the entrance of it he gives of himself, and such other intimations of his principles as he is pleased to communicate, I suppose he will be willing we should take notice of, and that we may do so without offence.

Thus in the entrance of his preface he tells us, that he is 'a person of such a tame and softly humour, and so cold a complexion, that he thinks himself scarce capable of hot and passionate impressions,' though I suppose he avow himself, p. 4. to be chafed into some heat and briskness, with that evenness and steadiness of expression, which we shall be farther accustomed unto. But in what here he avers of himself, he seems to have the advantage of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, upon less provocations than he hath undertaken the consideration of (for the Pharisees with whom he had to deal, were gentlemen he tells us, unto those with whom himself hath to do), as he saith, 'fell into a hot fit of zeal, yea, into a height of impatience, which made him act with a seeming fury and transport of passion;' p. 7. And if that be indeed his temper which he commends in himself, he seems to me to be obliged for it unto his constitution and complexion, as he speaks, and not to his age; seeing his juvenile expressions and confidence will not allow us to think that he suffers under any defervescency of spirit by his years. The philosopher tells us, that old men in matters dubious and weighty, are not over-forward to be positive, but ready to cry, ἴσως και τάχα, perhaps, and it may be so, and this διὶ ἐμπειρίαν, because they have experience of the uncertainty of things in this world. As indeed those who know what entanglements all human affairs are attended

withal, what appearing causes and probable reasons are to be considered and examined about them, and how all rational determinations are guided and influenced by unforeseen emergencies and occasions, will not be over-forward to pronounce absolutely and peremptorily about the disposal of important affairs. But as the same author informs us, *οἱ νέοι εἰδέναι πάντα οἴονται καὶ διισχυρίζονται*; 'young men suppose that they know all things, and are vehement in their asseverations;' from which frame proceeded all those dogmatical assertions of what is politic and impolitic in princes, of what will establish or ruin governments, with the contempt of the conceptions of others about things conducing to public peace and tranquillity, which so frequently occur in our author. This makes him smile at as serious consultations for the furtherance of the welfare and prosperity of this nation, as it may be in any age or juncture of time have been upon the wheel; preface, p. 48. These considerations made it seem to me, that in an ordinary course, he hath time enough before him to improve the notions he hath here blessed the world with a discovery of; if upon second thoughts he be equally enamoured of them unto what now he seems to be.

I could indeed have desired, that he had given us a more clear account of that religion which in his judgment he doth most approve. His commendation of the church of England, sufficiently manifesteth his interest to lie therein; and that in pursuit of his own principles he doth outwardly observe the institutions and prescriptions of it. But the scheme he hath given us of religion, or religious duties, wherein there is mention neither of sin, nor a Redeemer, without which no man can entertain any one true notion of Christian religion, would rather bespeak him a philosopher, than a Christian. It it not unlikely, but that he will pretend he was treating of religion, as religion in general, without an application of it to this or that in particular; but to speak of religion as it is among men in this world, or ever was since the fall of Adam, without a supposition of sin, and the way of a relief from the event of it mentioned, is to talk of chimeras, things that neither are, ever were, or will be. On the other hand, the profit and advantage of his design falls clearly on the papal interest. For whereas it is framed and contrived for the advantage, security, and un-

questionableness of absolute compliers with the present possessors of power, it is evident, that in the state of Europe, the advantage lies incomparably on that hand. But these things are not our concernment. The designs which he manageth in his discourse, the subject matter of it, the manner how he treats those with whom he hath to do, and deports himself therein, are by himself exposed to the judgment of all, and are here to be taken into some examination. Now because we have in his preface a perfect representation of the things last mentioned throughout the whole, I shall in the first place take a general view and prospect of it.

And here I must have regard to the judgment of others. I confess, for my own part, I do not find myself at all concerned in those invectives, tart and upbraiding expressions, those sharp and twinging satires against his adversaries, which he avoweth or rather boasteth himself to have used. If this unparalleled heap of revilings, scoffings, despiteful reproaches, sarcasms, scornful contemptuous expressions, false criminations, with frequent intimations of sanguinary affections towards them do please his fancy, and express his morality to his own satisfaction, I shall never complain that he hath used his liberty; and do presume that he judgeth it not meet that it should be restrained. It is far from my purpose to return him any answer in the like manner to these things; to do it

——— opus est mangone perito
Qui Smithfieldensi polleat eloquio:

Yet some instances of prodigious excesses in this kind, will in our process be reflected on. And it may be the repetition of them may make an appearance unto some less considerate readers, of a little harshness in some passages of this return. But as nothing of that nature in the least is intended, nothing that might provoke the author in his own spirit, were he capable of any hot impressions, nothing to disadvantage him in his reputation or esteem, so what is spoken being duly weighed, will be found to have nothing sharp or unpleasant in it, but what is unavoidably infused into it from the discourse itself, in its approach unto it to make a representation of it.

It is of more concernment to consider with what frame and temper of spirit he manageth his whole cause and debate; and this is such as that a man who knows nothing

of him, but what he learns from this discourse, would suppose that he hath been some great commander,

> In campis Gurgustidoniis
> Ubi Bombamachides Cluninstarydisarchides
> Erat imperator summus; Neptuni nepos.

Associate unto him, who with his breath blew away and scattered all the legions of his enemies, as the wind doth leaves in autumn.

Such confidence in himself and his own strength; such contempt of all his adversaries, as persons silly, ignorant, illiterate; such boastings of his achievements, with such a face and appearance of scorning all that shall rise up against him; such expressions 'animi gladiatorii' doth he march withal as no man sure will be willing to stand in his way, unless he think himself to have lived, at least quietly, long enough. Only some things there are, which I cannot but admire in his undertaking and management of it; as first, that such a man of arms and art as he is, should harness himself with so much preparation, and enter the lists with so much pomp and glory, to combat such pitiful, poor, baffled ignoramuses as he hath chosen to contend withal; especially considering that he knew he had them bound hand and foot, and cast under his strokes at his pleasure. Methinks it had more become him to have sought out some giant in reason and learning, that might have given him at least 'par animo periculum,' as Alexander said in his conflict with Porus, a danger big enough to exercise his courage, though through mistake it should in the issue have proved but a windmill. Again; I know not whence it is, nor by what rules of errantry it may be warranted, that being to conflict with such pitiful trifles, he should before he come near to touch them, thunder out such terrible words, and load them with so many reproaches and contemptuous revilings, as if he designed to scare them out of the lists, that there might be no trial of his strength, nor exercise of his skill.

But leaving him to his own choice and liberty in these matters, I am yet persuaded that if he knew how little his adversaries esteem themselves concerned in, or worsted by his revilings, how small advantage he hath brought unto the cause managed by him, with what severity of censures, that I say not indignation, his proceedings herein

are reflected on by persons sober and learned, who have any respect to modesty or sobriety, or any reverence for the things of God, as debated among men, he would abate somewhat of that self-delight and satisfaction which he seems to take in his achievement.

Neither is it in the matter of dissent alone from the established forms of worship that this author, and some others, endeavour by their revilings and scoffings to expose nonconformists to scorn and violence; but a semblance at least is made of the like reflections on their whole profession of the gospel, and their worship of God; yea, these are the special subjects of those swelling words of contempt, those sarcastical invidious representations of what they oppose, which they seem to place their confidence of success in; but what do they think to effect by this course of procedure? do they suppose that by crying out canting, phrases, silly, nonsense, metaphors, they shall shame the nonconformists out of the profession of the gospel, or make them forgo the course of their ministry, or alienate one soul from the truth taught and professed amongst them? They know how their predecessors in the faith thereof, have been formerly entertained in the world: St. Paul himself, falling among the gentlemen philosophers of those days was termed by them σπερμολόγος, a 'babbler,' or one that canted; his doctrine despised as silly and foolish, and his phrases pretended to be unintelligible. These things move not the nonconformists, unless it be to a compassion for them whom they see to press their wits and parts to so wretched an employment. If they have any thing to charge on them with respect to gospel truths, as that they own, teach, preach, or publish any doctrines or opinions that are not agreeable thereunto, and doctrine of the ancient and late (reformed) churches, let them come forth, if they are men of learning, reading, and ingenuity, and in ways used and approved from the beginning of Christianity for such ends and purposes, endeavour their confutation and conviction; let them, I say, with the skill and confidence of men, and according to all rules of method and art, state the matters in difference between themselves and their adversaries, confirm their own judgments with such reasons and arguments as they think pleadable in their behalf, and oppose the opinions they condemn with

testimonies and reasons suited to their eversion. The course at present steered and engaged in, to carp at phrases, expressions, manners of the declaration of men's conceptions, collected from, or falsely fathered upon particular persons, thence intimated to be common to the whole party of nonconformists (the greatest guilt of some whereof, it may be, is only their too near approach to the expressions used in the Scripture to the same purpose, and the evidence of their being educed from thence), is unmanly, unbecoming persons of any philosophic generosity, much more Christians and ministers; nay, some of the things or sayings reflected on and carped at by a late author, are such, as those who have used or asserted them, dare modestly challenge him in their defence to make good his charge in a personal conference, provided it may be scholastical or logical, not dramatic or romantic. And surely were it not for their confidence in that tame and patient humour, which this author so tramples upon, p. 15. they could not but fear that some or other by these disingenuous proceedings might be provoked to a recrimination, and to give in a charge against the cursed oaths, debaucheries, profaneness, various immoralities, and sottish ignorance, that are openly and notoriously known to have taken up their residence among some of those persons, whom the railleries of this and some other authors are designed to countenance and secure.

Because we may not concern ourselves again in things of this nature, let us take an instance or two of the manner of the dealing of our author with nonconformists, and those as to their preaching and praying, which of all things they are principally maligned about; for their preaching he thus sets it out, p. 75. ‘ Whoever among them can invent any new language presently sets up for a man of new discoveries, and he that lights upon the prettiest nonsense, is thought by the ignorant rabble to unfold new gospel mysteries, and thus is the nation shattered into infinite factions with senseless and fantastic phrases; and the most fatal miscarriage of them all lies in abusing Scripture expressions, not only without, but in contradiction to their sense; so that had we but an act of parliament to abridge preachers the use of fulsome and luscious metaphors, it might perhaps be an effectual cure of all our present distempers. Let not the reader smile

at the oddness of the proposal; for were men obliged to speak sense as well as truth, all the swelling mysteries of fanaticism would then sink into flat and empty nonsense: and they would be ashamed of such jejune and ridiculous stuff as their admired and most profound notions would appear to be.' Certainly there are few who read these expressions that can retain themselves from smiling at the pitiful fantastic souls that are here characterized; or from loathing their way of preaching here represented. But yet if any should by a surprisal indulge themselves herein, and one should seriously inquire what it is that stirred those humours in them, it may be they could scarce return a rational account of their commotions: for when they have done their utmost to countenance themselves in their scorn and derision, they have nothing but the bare assertions of this author for the proof of what is here charged on those whom they deride; and how if these things are most of them, if not all of them, absolutely false? how if he be not able to prove any of them by any considerable avowed instance? how if all the things intended, whether they be so or no as here represented, depend merely on the judgment and fancy of this author, and it should prove in the issue that they are no such rules, measures, or standards of men's rational expressions of their conceptions, but that they may be justly appealed from? and how if sundry things so odiously here expressed, be proved to have been sober truths declared in words of wisdom and sobriety? what if the things condemned as fulsome metaphors prove to be Scriptural expressions of gospel mysteries? what if the principal doctrines of the gospel about the grace of God, the mediation of Christ, of faith, justification, gospel obedience, communion with God, and union with Christ, are esteemed and stigmatized by some as swelling mysteries of fanaticism; and the whole work of our redemption by the blood of Christ, as expressed in the Scripture, be deemed metaphorical? In brief, what if all this discourse concerning the preachings of nonconformists be, as unto the sense of the words here used, false, and the crimes in them injuriously charged upon them? what if the metaphors they are charged with, are no other but their expression of gospel mysteries 'not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, com-

paring spiritual things with spiritual?' as these things may and will be made evident when particulars shall be instanced in. When, I say, these things are discovered and laid open, there will be a composure possibly of those affections and disdainful thoughts, which these swelling words may have moved in weak and inexperienced minds. It may be also it will appear, that upon a due consideration there will be little subject matter remaining to be enacted in that law or act of parliament which he moves for; unless it be from that uncouth motion that men may be 'obliged to speak sense as well as truth;' seeing hitherto it hath been supposed that every proposition that is either true or false, hath a proper and determined sense; and if sense it have not, it can be neither. I shall only crave leave to say, that as to the doctrine which they preach, and the manner of their preaching, or the way of expressing those doctrines or truths which they believe and teach, the nonconformists appeal from the rash, false, and invidious charge of this author, to the judgment of all learned, judicious, and pious men in the world; and are ready to defend them against himself, and whosoever he shall take to be his patrons or his associates, before any equal, competent, and impartial tribunal under heaven. It is far from me to undertake the absolute defence of any party of men, or of any man because he is of any party whatever; much less shall I do so of all the individual persons of any party, and least of all, as to all their expressions, private opinions, and peculiar ways of declaring them, which too much abound among persons of all sorts. I know there is no party but have weak men belonging to it; nor any men amongst them but have their weaknesses, failings, and mistakes. And if there are none such in the church of England, I mean those that universally comply with all the observances at present used therein, I am sure enough that there are so amongst all other parties that dissent from it. But such as these are not principally intended in these aspersions: nor would their adversaries much rejoice to have them known to be, and esteemed of all what they are. But it is others whom they aim to expose into contempt; and in the behalf of them, not the mistakes, misapprehensions, or undue expressions of any private persons, these things are pleaded.

But let us see if their prayers meet with any better entertainment; an account of his thoughts about them he gives us, p. 19. 'It is the most solemn strain of their devotion to vilify themselves with large confessions of the heinousest and most aggravated sins: they will freely acknowledge their offences against all the commands, and that with the foulest and most enhancing circumstances; they can rake together, and confess their injustice, uncleanness, and extortion, and all the publican and harlot sins in the world; in brief, in all their confessions, they stick not to charge themselves with such large catalogues of sin, and to amass together such a heap of impieties, as would make up the completest character of lewdness and villany; and if their consciences do really arraign them of all those crimes whereof they so familiarly indict themselves, there are no such guilty and unpardonable wretches as they. So that their confessions are either true or false; if false, then they fool and trifle with the Almighty; if true, then I could easily tell them the fittest place to say their prayers in.'

I confess this passage at its first perusal surprised me with some amazement. It was unexpected to me, that he who designed all along to charge his adversaries with pharisaism, and to render them like unto them, should instance in their confession of sin in their prayers, when it is even a characteristical note of the Pharisees, that in their prayers they made no confession of sin at all. But it was far more strange to me, that any man durst undertake the reproaching of poor sinners with the deepest acknowledgment of their sins before the holy God, that they are capable to conceive or utter. Is this, thought I, the spirit of the men with whom the nonconformists do contend, and upon whose instance alone they suffer? Are these their apprehensions concerning God, sin, themselves, and others? Is this the spirit wherewith the children of the church are acted? Are these things suited to the principles, doctrines, practices of the church of England? Such reproaches and reflections, indeed, might have been justly expected from those poor deluded souls, who dream themselves perfect and free from sin; but to meet with such a treaty from them who say or sing, 'O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners,' at least three times a week, was some sur-

prisal. However, I am sure, the nonconformists need return no other answer to them who reproach them for vilifying themselves in their confessions to God, but that of David to Michal, 'It is before the Lord, and we will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in our own sight.' Our author makes no small stir with the pretended censures of some whom he opposes; namely, that they should 'esteem themselves and their party to be the elect of God, all others to be reprobates, themselves and theirs to be godly, and all others ungodly;' wherein I am satisfied, that he unduly chargeth those whom he intends to reflect upon. However I am none of them; I do not judge any party to be all the elect of God, or all the elect of God to be confined unto any party; I judge no man living to be a reprobate, though I doubt not but that there are living men in that condition; I confine not holiness or godliness to any party; not to the church of England, nor to any of those who dissent from it; but am persuaded that in all societies of Christians that are under heaven that hold the head, there are some really fearing God, working righteousness, and accepted with him. But yet neither my own judgment, nor the reflections of this author, can restrain me from professing that I fear that he who can thus trample upon men, scoff at and deride them for the deepest confessions of their sins before God which they are capable of making, is scarce either well acquainted with the holiness of God, the evil of sin, or the deceitfulness of his own heart, or did not in his so doing, take them into sufficient consideration. The church of England itself requires its children to 'acknowledge their manifold sins and wickednesses, which from time to time they have grievously committed by thought, word, and deed, against the divine Majesty;' and what in general others can confess more, I know not. If men that are, through the light of God's Spirit and grace, brought to an acquaintance with the deceitful workings of sin in their own hearts, and the hearts of others, considering aright the terror of the Lord, and the manifold aggravations wherewith all their sins are attended, do more particularly express these things before and to the Lord, when indeed nor they, nor any other can declare the thousandth part of the vileness and unworthiness of sin and sinners on the account

thereof, shall they be now despised for it, and judged to be men meet to be hanged? If this author had but seriously perused the confessions of Austin, and considered how he traces his sin from his nature in the womb, through the cradle, into the whole course of his life, with his marvellous and truly ingenuous acknowledgments and aggravations of it, perhaps the reverence of so great a name might have caused him to suspend this rash, and I fear, impious discourse.

For the particular instances wherewith he would countenance his sentiments and censures in this matter, there is no difficulty in their removal. Our Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us to call the most secret workings of sin in the heart, though resisted, though controlled, and never suffered to bring forth, by the names of those sins which they lie in a tendency unto; and men in their confessions respect more the pravity of their natures, and the inward working and actings of sin, than the outward perpetrations of it, wherein perhaps they may have little concernment in the world; as Job, who pleaded his uprightness, integrity, and righteousness against the charge of all his friends, yet when he came to deal with God, he could take that prospect of his nature and heart, as to vilify himself before him, yea, to abhor himself in dust and ashes.

Again, ministers who are the mouths of the congregation to God may, and ought to acknowledge, not only the sins whereof themselves are personally guilty, but those also which they judge may be upon any of the congregation. This assuming of the persons of them to whom they speak, or in whose name they speak, is usual even to the sacred writers themselves. So speaks the apostle Peter, 1 Epist. iv. 3. 'For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' He puts himself amongst them, although the time past of his life in particular was remote enough for being spent in the manner there described: and so it may be with ministers when they confess the sins of the whole congregation. And the dilemma of this author about the truth or falsehood of these confessions, will fall as heavy on St. Paul as on any nonconformist in

the world. For besides the acknowledgment that he makes of the former sins of his life when he was injurious, a blasphemer, and persecutor (which sins I pray God deliver others from), and the secret working of indwelling sin, which he cries out in his present condition to be freed from; he also when an apostle professeth himself the 'chiefest of sinners;' now this was either true, or it was not; if it was not true, God was mocked; if it were, our author could have directed him to the fittest place to have made his acknowledgements in. What thinks he of the confessions of Ezra, of Daniel, and others in the name of the whole people of God? Of David concerning himself, whose self-abasements before the Lord, acknowledgments of the guilt of sin in all its aggravations and effects, far exceed any thing that nonconformists are able to express.

As to his instances of the confession of injustice, uncleanness, and extortion, it may be as to the first and last, he would be put to it to make it good by express particulars; and I wish it be not found that some have need to confess them, who cry at present, they are not of these publicans. Uncleanness seems to bear the worst sound, and to lead the mind to the worst apprehensions of all the rest; but it is God with whom men have to do in their confessions; and before him, 'What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water,' Job xv. 14—16. and the whole church of God in their confession cry out, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;' Isa. lxiv. 6. There is a pollution of flesh and spirit, which we are still to be cleansing ourselves from whilst we are in this world.

But to what purpose is it to contend about these things? I look upon this discourse of our author as a signal instance of the power of prejudice and passions over the minds of men. For, setting aside the consideration of a present influence from them, I cannot believe that any one that professeth the religion taught by Jesus Christ, and contained in the Scripture, can be so ignorant of the terror of the Lord, so unaccustomed to thoughts of his infinite purity,

severity, and holiness; such a stranger to the accuracy, spirituality, and universality of the law; so unacquainted with the sin of nature, and the hidden deceitful workings of it in the hearts, minds, and affections of men; so senseless of the great guilt of the least sin, and the manifold inexpressible aggravations wherewith it is attended; so unexercised to that self-abasement and abhorrency which becomes poor sinners in their approaches to the holy God, when they consider what they are in themselves; so disrespective of the price of redemption that was paid for our sins, and the mysterious way of cleansing our souls from them by the blood of the Son of God, as to revile, despise, and scoff at men for the deepest humblings of their souls before God, in the most searching and expressive acknowledgments of their sins, that they do or can make at any time.

The like account may be given of all the charges that this author manageth against the men of his indignation; but I shall return at present to the preface under consideration.

In the entrance of his discourse, being, as it seems, conscious to himself of a strange and wild intemperance of speech in reviling his adversaries, which he had either used, or intended so to do, he pleads sundry things in his excuse or for his justification. Hereof the first is, his zeal for the reformation of the church of England, and the settlement thereof with its forms and institutions; these, he saith, are 'countenanced by the best and purest times of Christianity, and established by the fundamental laws of this land' (which yet, as to the things in contest between him and nonconformists, I greatly doubt of, as not believing any fundamental law of this land to be of so late a date); to see this 'opposed by a wild and fanatic rabble, rifled by folly and ignorance, on slender and frivolous pretences so often and so shamefully baffled, yet again revived by the pride and ignorance of a few peevish, ignorant, and malapert preachers, brainsick people' (all which gentle and peaceable expressions are crowded together in the compass of a few lines), is that which hath 'chafed him into this heat and briskness;' if this be not to deal with gainsayers in a spirit of meekness, if herein there be not an observation of the rules of speaking evil of no man, despising no man, of not

saying 'Raca,' to our brother, or calling of him 'fool;' if here be not a discovery how remote he is from self-conceit, elation of mind, and the like immoralities, we must make inquiry after such things elsewhere; for in this whole insuing treatise we shall scarce meet with any thing more tending to our satisfaction. For the plea itself made use of, those whom he so tramples on do highly honour the reformation of the church of England, and bless God for it continually, as that which hath had a signal tendency unto his glory, and usefulness to the souls of men. That as to the outward rites of worship and discipline contested about, it was in all things conformed unto the great rule of them, our author doth not pretend; nor can he procure it in those things, whatever he says, any countenance from the best and purest times of Christianity: that it was every way perfect in its first edition, I suppose, will not be affirmed; nor, considering the posture of affairs at the time of its framing both in other nations and in our own, was it like it should so be. We may rather admire that so much was then done according to the will of God, than that there was no more. Whatever is wanting in it, the fault is not to be cast on the first reformers, who went as far as well in those days could be expected from them. Whether others who have succeeded in their place and room, have since discharged their duty in perfecting what was so happily begun, is 'sub judice,' and there will abide after this author and I have done writing. That as to the things mentioned, it never had an absolute quiet possession or admittance in this nation, that a constant and no inconsiderable suffrage hath from first to last been given in against it, cannot be denied; and for any 'savage worrying' or 'rifling of it' at present, no man is so barbarous as to give the least countenance to any such thing. That which is intended in these exclamations is only a desire that those who cannot comply with it as now established in the matters of discipline and worship before mentioned, may not merely for that cause be worried and destroyed, as many as have already been.

Again, the chief glory of the English reformation consisted in the purity of its doctrine, then first restored to the nation. This, as it is expressed in the articles of religion, and in the publicly authorized writings of the bishops and

chief divines of the church of England, is, as was said, the glory of the English reformation. And it is somewhat strange to me, that whilst one writes against original sin, another preaches up justification by works, and scoffs at the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them that believe; yea, whilst some can openly dispute against the doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and the Holy Ghost; whilst instances may be collected of some men's impeaching all the articles almost throughout, there should be no reflection in the least on these things; only those who dissent from some outward methods of worship must be made the object of all this wrath and indignation.

Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?

Some men's guilt in this nature, might rather mind them of pulling out the beam out of their own eyes, than to act with such fury to pull out the eyes of others, for the motes which they think they espy in them. But hence is occasion given to pour out such a storm of fury, conveyed by words of as great reproach and scorn as the invention of any man I think could suggest, as is not lightly to be met withal: might our author be prevailed with to mind the old rule, 'mitte male loqui, dic rem ipsam,' these things might certainly be debated with less scandal, less mutual offences and provocations.

Another account of the reasons of his intemperance in these reproaches, supplying him with an opportunity to increase them in number and weight, he gives us, pp. 6, 7. of his preface, which because it may well be esteemed a summary representation of his way and manner of arguing in his whole discourse, I shall transcribe.

'I know,' says he, 'but one single instance in which zeal or a high indignation is just and warrantable: and that is when it vents itself against the arrogance of haughty, peevish, and sullen religionists, that under higher pretences of godliness supplant all principles of civility and good-nature; that strip religion of its outside to make it a covering for spite and malice; that adorn their peevishness with a mark of piety, and shrowd their ill-nature under the demure pretences of godly zeal, and stroke and applaud themselves as the only darlings and favourites of heaven; and with a

scornful pride disdained all the residue of mankind as a rout of worthless and unregenerate reprobates. Thus the only hot fit of zeal we find our Saviour in, was kindled by an indignation against the pride and insolence of the Jews, when he whipped the buyers and sellers out of the outward court of the temple; for though they bore a blind and superstitious reverence towards that part of it that was peculiar to their own worship, yet as for the outward court, the place where the Gentiles and proselytes worshipped, that was so unclean and unhallowed, that they thought it could not be profaned by being turned into an exchange of usury: now this insolent contempt of the Gentiles, and impudent conceit of their own holiness, provoked the mild spirit of our blessed Saviour to such an height of impatience and indignation, as made him with a seeming fury and transport of passion whip the tradesmen thence, and overthrew their tables.'

What truth, candour, or conscience hath been attended unto in the insolent reproaches here heaped up against his adversaries, is left to the judgment of God and all impartial men; yea, let judgment be made, and sentence be past according to the ways, course of life, conversation, usefulness amongst men, readiness to serve the common concerns of mankind, in exercising loving-kindness in the earth, of those who are thus injuriously traduced, compared with any in the approbation and commendation of whom they are covered with these reproaches, and there lives not that person who may not be admitted to pronounce concerning the equity and righteousness or iniquity of these intemperances. However, it is nothing with them with whom he hath to do to be judged by man's day; they stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, and have not so learned him as to relieve themselves by false or fierce recriminations. The measure of the covering provided for all these excesses of unbridled passion is that alone which is now to be taken. The case expressed, it seems, is the only single instance in which zeal is just and warrantable. How our author came to be assured thereof I know not; sure I am that it doth neither comprise in it, nor hath any aspect on, the ground, occasion, or nature of the zeal of Phinehas, or of Nehemiah, or of David, or of Joshua, and least of all of our Saviour, as we shall see. He must needs be thought to be over-intent upon his present occa-

sion, when he forgot not one, or two, but indeed all instances of just and warrantable zeal that are given us in the only sacred repository of them.

For what concerns the example of our blessed Saviour particularly insisted on, I wish he had offended one way only in the report he makes of it. For let any sober man judge, in the first place, whether those expressions he useth of the 'hot fit of zeal' that he was in, of the 'height of impatience' that he was provoked unto, the 'seeming fury and transport of passion' that he acted withal, do become that reverence and adoration of the Son of God which ought to possess the hearts, and guide the tongues and writings of men that profess his name. But whatever other men's apprehensions may be, as it is not improbable but that some will exercise severity in their reflections on these expressions, for my part, I shall entertain no other thoughts but that our author being engaged in the composition of an invective declamation, and aiming at a grandeur of words, yea to fill it up with tragical expressions, could not restrain his pen from some extravagant excess when the Lord Christ himself came in his way to be spoken of.

However, it will be said the instance is pertinently alleged, and the occasion of the exercise of the zeal of our blessed Saviour is duly represented. It may be some will think so, but the truth is, there are scarce more lines than mistakes in the whole discourse to this purpose. What court it was of the temple wherein the action remembered was performed, is not here particularly determined; only it is said to be the 'outward court wherein the Gentiles and proselytes worshipped, in opposition to that which was peculiar to the worship of the Jews.' Now of old from the first erection of the temple there were two courts belonging unto it, and no more; the inward court, wherein were the brazen altar, with all those utensils of worship which the priests made use of in their sacred offices; and the outward court, whither the people assembled, as for other devotions, so to behold the priests exercising their function, and to be in a readiness to bring in their own especial sacrifices, upon which account they were admitted to the altar itself. Into this outward court, which was a dedicated part of the temple, all Gentiles who were proselytes of righteousness, that

is, who being circumcised had taken upon them the observation of the law of Moses, and thereby joined themselves to the people of God, were admitted, as all the Jewish writers agree. And these were all the courts that were at first sanctified, and were in use when the words were spoken by the prophet, which are applied to the action of our Saviour; namely, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves;' afterward, in the days of the Herodians, another court was added by the immuring of the remainder of the hill, whereunto a promiscuous entrance was granted unto all people. It was therefore the ancient outward court whereinto the Jews thought that Paul had brought Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they knew to be uncircumcised. I confess some expositors think that it was this latter area from whence the Lord Christ cast out the buyers and sellers; but their conjecture seems to be altogether groundless; for neither was that court ever absolutely called the temple, nor was it esteemed sacred, but common or profane; nor was it in being when the prophet used the words mentioned concerning the temple. It was therefore the other ancient outward court common to the Jews and proselytes of the Gentiles that is intended; for as there the salt and wood were stored, that were daily used in their sacrifices, so the covetous priests, knowing that many who came up to offer were wont to buy the beasts they sacrificed at Jerusalem to prevent the charge and labour of bringing them from far; to further, as they pretended, their accommodation, they appropriated a market to themselves in this court, and added a trade in money, relating it may be thereunto, and other things for their advantage. Hence the Lord Christ twice drove them; once at the beginning, and once at the end of his ministry in the flesh; not with a seeming transport of fury, but with that evidence of the presence of God with him, and majesty of God upon him, that it is usually reckoned amongst one of the miracles that he wrought, considering the state of all things at that time amongst the Jews. And the reason why he did this, and the occasion of the exercise of his zeal, is so express in the Scripture, as I cannot but admire at the invention of our author, who could find out another reason and occasion of it. For it is said directly, that he did it because of their

wicked profanation of the house of God, contrary to his express institution and command; of a regard to the Jews' contempt of the Gentiles there is not one word, not the least intimation; nor was there in this matter the least occasion of any such thing.

These things are not pleaded in the least to give countenance to any in their proud supercilious censures and contempt of others, wherein if any person living have outdone our author, or shall endeavour so to do, he will not fail I think to carry away the prize in this unworthy contest. Nor is it to apologize for them whom he charges with extravagancies and excesses in this kind. I have no more to say in their behalf, but that, as far as I know, they are falsely accused and calumniated, though I will not be accountable for the expressions of every weak and impertinent person. Where men indeed sin openly in all manner of transgressions against the law and gospel, where a spirit of enmity to holiness and obedience unto God discovers and acts itself constantly on all occasions; in a word, where men wear sin's livery, some are not afraid to think them sin's servants. But as to that elation of mind in self-conceit wherewith they are charged, their contempt of other men upon the account of party, which he imputes unto them, I must expect other proofs than the bare assertion of this author before I join with him in the management of his accusations. And no other answer shall I return to the ensuing leaves, fraught with bitter reproaches, invectives, sarcasms, far enough distant from truth and all sobriety. Nor shall I, though in their just and necessary vindication, make mention of any of those things which might represent them persons of another complexion. If this author will give those whom he probably most aims to load with these aspersions, leave to confess themselves poor and miserable sinners in the sight of God, willing to bear his indignation against whom they have sinned, and to undergo quietly the severest rebukes and revilings of men, in that they know not but that they have a providential permissive commission from God so to deal with them, and add thereunto, that they yet hope to be saved by Jesus Christ, and in that hope endeavour to give up themselves in obedience to all his commands, it contains that description of them which they shall al-

ways and in all conditions endeavour to answer. But I have only given these remarks upon the preceding discourse, to discover upon what feeble grounds our author builds for his own justification in his present engagement.

Page 13. of his preface, he declares his original design in writing this discourse, which was to 'represent to the world the lamentable folly and silliness of those men's religion with whom he had to do,' which he farther expresses and pursues with such a lurry of virulent reproaches, as I think is not to be paralleled in any leaves but some others of the same hand; and in the close thereof he supposeth he hath evinced that in comparison of them 'the most insolent of the Pharisees were gentlemen, and the most savage of the Americans philosophers.' I must confess myself an utter stranger unto that generous disposition and philosophic nobleness of mind which vent themselves in such revengeful scornful wrath, expressed in such rude and barbarous railings against any sort of men whatever, as that here manifested in, and those here used by this author. If this be a just delineation and character of the spirit of a gentleman, a due portraiture of the mind and affections of a philosopher, I know not who will be ambitious to be esteemed either the one or the other. But what measures men now make of gentility I know not; truly noble generosity of spirit was heretofore esteemed to consist in nothing more than remoteness from such pedantic severities against, and contemptuous reproaches of persons under all manner of disadvantages, yea, impossibilities to manage their own just vindication, as are here exercised and expressed in this discourse. And the principal pretended attainment of the old philosophy was a sedateness of mind, and a freedom from turbulent passions and affections under the greatest provocations, which if they are here manifested by our author, they will give the greater countenance unto the character which he gives of others; the judgment and determination whereof is left unto all impartial readers.

But in this main design he professeth himself prevented by the late learned and ingenious discourse, The Friendly Debate; which to manifest, it may be, that his rhetorical faculty is not confined to invectives, he spendeth some pages in the splendid encomiums of. There is no doubt, I sup-

pose, but that the author of that discourse will on the next occasion requite his panegyric, and return him his commendations for his own achievements with advantage; they are like enough to agree like those of the poet,

> Discedo Alcæus puncto illius, ille meo quis?
> Quis nisi Callimachus?

For the present, his account of the excellencies and successes of that discourse minds me of the dialogue between Pyrgopolynices and Artotrogus:

> *Pyrg.* Ecquid meministi? *Art.* Memini; centum in Cilicià,
> Et quinquaginta centum Sycolatronidæ,
> Triginta Sardi, sexaginta Macedones,
> Sunt homines tu quos occidisti uno die.
> *Pyrg.* Quanta isthæc hominum summa est?
> *Art.* Septem millia.
> *Pyrg.* Tantum esse oportet; rectè rationem tenes.
> *Art.* At nullos habeo scriptos, sic memini tamen.

Although the particular instances he gives of the man's successes, are prodigiously ridiculous, yet the casting up of the sum total to the completing of his victory, sinks them all out of consideration: and such is the account we have here of the Friendly Debate. This and that it hath effected, which though unduly asserted as to the particular instances, yet altogether comes short of that absolute victory and triumph which are ascribed unto it. But I suppose that upon due consideration, men's glorying in those discourses will be but as the crackling of thorns in the fire, noise and smoke, without any real and solid use or satisfaction. The great design of the author, as is apparent unto all, was to render the sentiments and the expressions of his adversaries ridiculous, and thereby to expose their persons to contempt and scorn,

> Egregiam vero laudem et spolia ampla!

And to this end his way of writing by dialogues is exceedingly suited and accommodated: for although ingenious and learned men, such as Plato and Cicero, have handled matters of the greatest importance in that way of writing, candidly proposing the opinions and arguments of adverse parties in the persons of the dialogists, and sometimes used that method to make their design of instruction more easy and perspicuous, yet it cannot be denied that advantages may be taken from this way of writing to represent both persons, opinions, and practices, invidiously and contemptuously, above any other way; and therefore it hath been prin-

cipally used by men who have had that design. And I know nothing in the skilful contrivance of dialogues, which is boasted of here with respect unto the Friendly Debate, as also by the author of it in his preface to one of his worthy volumes, that should free the way of writing itself from being supposed to be peculiarly accommodated to the ends mentioned. Nor will these authors charge them with want of skill and art in composing of their dialogues, who have designed nothing in them but to render things uncouth, and persons ridiculous, with whom themselves were in worth and honesty no way to be compared.

An instance hereof we have in the case of Socrates. Sundry in the city being weary of him for his uprightness, integrity, and continual pressing of them to courses of the like nature; some also being in an especial manner incensed at him, and provoked by him; amongst them they contrived his ruin. That they might effect this design, they procured Aristophanes to write a dialogue, his comedy which he entitled Νεφέλαι, 'The Clouds;' wherein Socrates is introduced and personated, talking at as contemptible and ridiculous a rate, as any one can represent the nonconformists to do; and yet withal to commend himself as the only man considerable amongst them. Without some such preparation of the people's minds, his enemies thought it impossible to obtain his persecution and destruction; and they failed not in their projection. Aristophanes being poor, witty, and as is supposed, hired to this work, lays out the utmost of his endeavours so to frame and order his dialogues, with such elegancy of words and composure of his verses, with such a semblance of relating the words and expressing the manner of Socrates, as might leave an impression on the minds of the people. And the success of it was no way inferior to that of the Friendly Debate; for though at first the people were somewhat surprised with seeing such a person so traduced, yet they were after a while so pleased and tickled with the ridiculous representation of him and his philosophy, wherein there was much of appearance and nothing of truth, that they could make no end of applauding the author of the Dialogues. And though this was the known design of that poet, yet that his Dialogues were absurd and inartificial, I suppose will not be affirmed; seeing few were ever more

skilfully contrived. Having got this advantage of exposing him to public contempt, his provoked malicious adversaries began openly to manage their accusation against him. The principal crime laid to his charge was nonconformity, or that he did not comply with the religion which the supreme magistrate had enacted; or as they then phrased it, he esteemed not them to be gods whom the city so esteemed. By these means, and through these advantages, they ceased not until they had destroyed the best and wisest person that ever that city bred in its heathen condition, and whereof they quickly repented themselves. The reader may see the whole story exactly related in Ælian. lib. 2. Var. Histor. cap. 13. Much of it also may be collected from the Apologies of Xenophon and Plato in behalf of Socrates, as also Plutarch's Discourse concerning his Genius. To this purpose have dialogues very artificially written been used, and are absolutely the most accommodate of all sorts of writing unto such a design. Hence Lucian, who aimed particularly to render the things which he disliked ridiculous and contemptible, used no other kind of writing; and I think his Dialogues will be allowed to be artificial, though sundry of them have no other design but to cast contempt on persons and opinions better than himself and his own. And this way of dealing with adversaries in points of faith, opinion, and judgment, hath hitherto been esteemed fitter for the stage, than a serious disquisition after truth, or confutation of error. Did those who admire their own achievements in this way of process, but consider how easy a thing it is for any one, deposing that respect to truth, modesty, sobriety, and Christianity which ought to accompany us in all that we do, to expose the persons and opinions of men by false, partial, undue representations, to scorn and contempt, they would perhaps cease to glory in their fancied success. It is a facile thing to take the wisest man living, and after he is lime-twigged with ink and paper, and gagged with a quill, so that he can neither move nor speak, to clap a fool's coat on his back, and turn him out to be laughed at in the streets. The stoics were not the most contemptible sort of philosophers of old, nor will be thought so by those, who profess their religion to consist in morality only: and yet the Roman orator, in his pleading for Muræna, finding it his present

interest to cast some disreputation upon Cato his adversary in that cause, who was addicted to that sect, so represented their dogmas, that he put the whole assembly into a fit of laughter; whereunto Cato only replied, that he made others laugh, but was himself ridiculous; and it may be some will find it to fall out not much otherwise with themselves by that time the whole account of their undertaking is well cast up.

Besides, do these men not know, that if others would employ themselves in a work of the like kind by way of retortion and recrimination, that they would find real matter amongst some whom they would have esteemed sacred, for an ordinary ingenuity to exercise itself upon unto their disadvantage? But what would be the issue of such proceedings? Who would be gainers by it? Every thing that is professed among them that own religion, all ways and means of their profession, being by their mutual reflections of this kind rendered ridiculous, what remains but that men fly to the sanctuary of atheism to preserve themselves from being scoffed at and despised as fools. On this account alone I would advise the author of our late debates to surcease proceeding in the same kind, lest a provocation unto a retaliation should befall any of those who are so foully aspersed.

But, as I said, what will be the end of these things, namely, of mutual virulent reflections upon one another? Shall this 'sword devour for ever? And will it not be bitterness in the latter end?' For, as he said of old of persons contending with revilings,

Ἔστι γὰρ ἀμφοτεροῖσιν ὀνείδεα μυθήσασθαι
Πολλὰ μάλ'; οὐδ' ἂν νηῦς ἑκατόζυγος ἄχθος ἄροιτο;
Στρεπτὴ δὲ γλῶσσ' ἐστὶ βροτῶν· πολέευς δ' ἔνι μῦθοι
Παντοῖσι, ἐπέων δὲ πολὺς νομὸς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα;
Οποῖον κ' ἐιπάσθα ἕπος, τοῖον κ' ἐπακούσαις.

Great store there are of such words and expressions on every hand, and every provoked person if he will not bind his passion to a rule of sobriety and temperance, may at his pleasure take out and use what he supposeth for his turn. And let not men please themselves with imagining that it is not as easy, though perhaps not so safe, for others to use towards themselves haughty and contemptuous expressions, as it is for them to use them towards others. But shall this

wrath never be allayed? Is this the way to restore peace, quietness, and satisfaction to the minds of men? Is it meet to use her language in this nation concerning the present differences about religion,

> Nullus amor populis, nec fœdera sunto;
> Imprecor arma armis, pugnent ipsique; nepotes?

Is agreement in all other things, all love and forbearance, unless there be a centring in the same opinions absolutely, become criminal, yea detestable? Will this way of proceeding compose and satisfy the minds of men? If there be no other way for a coalescence in love and unity in the bond of peace, but either that the nonconformists do depose and change in a moment, as it were, their thoughts, apprehensions, and judgments about the things in difference amongst us, which they cannot, which is not in their power to do; or that in the presence, and with a peculiar respect unto the eye and regard of God, they will act contrary unto them, which they ought not, which they dare not, no not upon the present instruction, the state of these things is somewhat deplorable.

That alone which in the discourses mentioned seemeth to me of any consideration, if it have any thing of truth to give it countenance, is that the nonconformists under pretence of preaching mysteries and grace, do neglect the pressing of moral duties, which are of near and indispensable concernment unto men in all their relations and actions, and without which religion is but a pretence and covering for vice and sin. A crime this is unquestionably of the highest nature if true, and such as might justly render the whole profession of those who are guilty of it suspected. And this is again renewed by our author, who, to charge home upon the nonconformists, reports the saying of Flacius Illyricus, a Lutheran, who died a hundred years ago; namely, that 'bona opera sunt perniciosa ad salutem,' though I do not remember that any such thing was maintained by Illyricus, though it was so by Amsdorfius against Georgius Major. But is it not strange how any man can assume to himself, and swallow so much confidence as is needful to the management of this charge? The books and treatises published by men of the persuasion traduced, their daily preaching witnessed unto by multitudes of all

sorts of people, the open avowing of their duty in this matter, their principles concerning sin, duty, holiness, virtue, righteousness, and honesty, do all of them proclaim the blackness of this calumny, and sink it with those who have taken, or are able to take, any sober cognizance of these things, utterly beneath all consideration; moral duties they do esteem, commend, count as necessary in religion as any men that live under heaven: it is true they say that on a supposition of that performance whereof they are capable without the assistance of the grace and Spirit of God, though they may be good in their own nature and useful to mankind, yet they are not available unto the salvation of the souls of men; and herein they can prove that they have the concurrent suffrage of all known churches in the world, both those of old, and these at present: they say, moreover, that for men to rest upon their performances of these moral duties for their justification before God, is but to set up their own righteousness through an ignorance of the righteousness of God, for we are freely justified by his grace; neither yet are they sensible of any opposition to this assertion.

For their own discharge of the work of the ministry they endeavour to take their rule, pattern, and instruction from the precepts, directions, and examples of them who were first commissionated unto that work, even the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, recorded in the Scripture, that they might be used and improved unto that end. By them are they taught to endeavour the declaring unto men all the counsel of God concerning his grace, their obedience, and salvation; and having the word of reconciliation committed unto them, they do pray their hearers in 'Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God;' to this end do they declare the 'unsearchable riches of Christ,' and comparatively determine' to know nothing in this world but 'Christ, and him crucified,' whereby their preaching becometh principally the word or doctrine of the cross, which by experience they find to be a 'stumbling block' unto some, and 'foolishness' unto others; by all means endeavouring to make known what 'is the riches of the glory of the mystery of God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' praying withal for their hearers that

'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may learn to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;' and in these things are they 'not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation.'

By this dispensation of the gospel do they endeavour to ingenerate in the hearts and souls of men, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' To prepare them also hereunto, they cease not by the preaching of the law, to make known to men the terror of the Lord, to convince them of the nature of sin, of their own lost and ruined condition by reason of it, through its guilt as both original in their natures, and actual in their lives, that they may be stirred up to 'fly from the wrath to come,' and to lay hold on eternal life; and thus as God is pleased to succeed them, do they endeavour to lay the great foundation Jesus Christ, in the hearts of their hearers, and to bring them to an interest in him by believing. In the farther pursuit of the work committed unto them, they endeavour more and more to declare unto, and instruct their hearers in all the mysteries and saving truths of the gospel, to the end that by the knowledge of them, they may be wrought unto obedience, and brought to conformity to Christ, which is the end of their declaration; and in the pursuit of their duty, there is nothing more that they insist upon, as far as ever I could observe, than an endeavour to convince men, that that faith or profession that doth not manifest itself, which is not justified by works, which doth not purify the heart within, that is not fruitful in universal obedience to all the commands of God, is vain and unprofitable; letting them know that though we are saved by grace, yet we are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus to good works, which he hath ordained for us to walk in them; a neglect whereof doth uncontrollably evict men of hypocrisy and falseness in their profession; that therefore these things in those that are adult, are indispensably necessary to salvation. Hence do they esteem it their duty continually to press upon their hearers the constant observance and doing

of 'whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are comely, whatsoever things are of good report;' letting them know that those who are called to a participation of the grace of the gospel, have more, higher, stronger obligations upon them to righteousness, integrity, honesty, usefulness amongst men, in all moral duties, throughout all relations, conditions, and capacities, than any others whatever.

For any man to pretend, to write, plead that this they do not, but indeed do discountenance morality and the duties of it, is to take a liberty of saying what he pleases for his own purpose, when thousands are ready from the highest experience to contradict him. And if this false supposition should prove the soul that animates any discourses, let men never so passionately admire them, and expatiate in the commendation of them, I know some that will not be their rivals in their extasies. For the other things which those books are mostly filled withal, setting aside frivolous trifling exceptions about modes of carriage, and common phrases of speech, altogether unworthy the review or perusal of a serious person, they consist of such exceptions against expressions, sayings, occasional reflections on texts of Scripture, invectives, and impertinent calling over of things past and by-gone, as the merit of the cause under contest is no way concerned in. And if any one would engage in so unhandsome an employment, as to collect such fond speeches, futilous expressions, ridiculous expositions of Scripture, smutty passages, weak, and impertinent discourses, yea, profane scurrilities, which some others, whom for their honour's sake and other reasons I shall not name, have in their sermons and discourses about sacred things been guilty of, he might provide matter enough for a score of such dialogues as the Friendly Debates are composed of.

But to return; that the advantages mentioned are somewhat peculiar unto dialogues, we have a sufficient evidence in this, that our author having another special design, he chose another way of writing suited thereunto. He professeth, that he hath neither hope nor expectation to convince his adversaries of their crimes or mistakes, nor doth endeavour any such thing. Nor did he merely project to render them

contemptible and ridiculous; which to have effected, the writing of dialogues in his management would have been most accommodate. But his purpose was to expose them to persecution, or to the severity of penal laws from the magistrate, and if possible, it may be, to popular rage and fury. The voice of his whole discourse is the same with that of the Jews concerning St. Paul, 'Away with such fellows from the earth, for it is not meet they should live.' Such an account of his thoughts he gives us, p. 253. saith he, 'the only cause of all our troubles and disturbances' (which what they are he knows not, nor can declare) 'is the inflexible perverseness of about a hundred proud, ignorant, and seditious preachers, against whom if the severity of the laws were particularly levelled how easy would it be,' &c.

Macte nova virtute puer, sic itur ad astra.

But I hope it will appear before the close of this discourse, that our author is far from deserving the reputation of infallible in his politics, whatever he may be thought to do in his divinity. It is sufficiently known how he is mistaken in his calculation of the numbers of those whom he designs to brand with the blackest marks of infamy, and whom he exposeth in his desires to the severities of law for their ruin. I am sure, it is probable, that there are more than a hundred of those whom he intends, who may say unto him, as Gregory of Nazianzen introduceth his father speaking to himself,

Nondum tot sunt anni tui, quot jam in sacris nobis sunt peracti victimis,

who have been longer in the ministry than he in the world. But suppose there were but a hundred of them; he knows, or may know, when there was such a disparity in the numbers of them that contested about religion, that it was said of them, 'All the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against the world;' who yet was in the right against them all, as they must acknowledge who frequently say or sing, his 'Quicunque vult.'

But how came he so well acquainted with them all and every one, as to pronounce of them that they are proud, ignorant, and seditious. Allow him the liberty, which I see he will take whether we allow it him or no, to call whom he pleaseth seditious upon the account of real or supposed

principles not compliant with his thoughts and apprehensions; yet that men are proud and ignorant, how he can prove but by particular instances from his own acquaintance with them, I know not. And if he should be allowed to be a competent judge of knowledge and ignorance in the whole compass of wisdom and science, which it may be some will except against, yet unless he had personally conversed with them all, or were able to give sufficient instances of their ignorance from actings, writings, or expressions of their own, he would scarce be able to give a tolerable account of the honesty of this his peremptory censure. And surely this must needs be looked on as a lovely, gentle, and philosophic humour, to judge all men proud and ignorant, who are not of our minds in all things, and on that ground alone.

But yet let them be as ignorant as can be fancied, this will not determine the difference between them and their adversaries. One unlearned Paphnutius in the council of Nice stopped all the learned fathers, when they were precipitately casting the church into a snare; and others, as unlearned as he, may honestly attempt the same at any time. And for our author's projection for the obtaining of quiet by severe dealings with these men in an especial manner, one of the same nature failed in the instance mentioned. For when Athanasius stood almost by himself in the eastern empire for a profession in religion, which the supreme magistrate and the generality of the clergy condemned, it was thought the levelling of severity in particular against him would bring all to a composure. To this purpose after they had again and again charged him to be proud and seditious, they vigorously engaged in his prosecution, according to the projection here proposed, and sought him near all the world over, but to no purpose at all, as the event discovered. For the truth which he professed having left its root in the hearts of multitudes of the people, on the first opportunity they returned again to the open avowing of it.

But to return from this digression: this being the design of our author, not so much to expose his adversaries to common contempt and laughter, as to ruin and destruction, he diverted from the beaten path of dialogues, and

betook himself unto that of rhetorical invective declamations, which is peculiarly suited to carry on and promote such a design. I shall therefore here leave him for the present, following the triumphant chariot of his friend, singing ' Io triumphe !' and casting reflections upon the captives that he drags after him at his chariot wheels; which will doubtless supply his imagination with a pleasing entertainment, until he shall awake out of his dream, and find all the pageantry that his fancy hath erected round about him to vanish and disappear.

His next attempt is upon athiests, wherein I have no concern, nor his principal adversaries the nonconformists. For my part I have had this advantage by my own obscurity and small consideration in the world, as never to converse with any persons that did or durst question the being or providence of God, either really or in pretence. By common reports, and published discourses, I find that there are not a few in these days, who either out of pride and ostentation, or in a real compliance with their own darkness and ignorance, do boldly venture to dispute the things which we adore; and if I am not greatly misinformed, a charge of this prodigious licentiousness and impiety may, from pregnant instances, be brought near the doors of some who on other occasions declaim against it. For practical atheism, the matter seems to be unquestionable: many live as though they believed neither God nor devil in the world but themselves. With neither sort am I concerned to treat at present, nor shall I examine the invectives of our author against them; though I greatly doubt, whether ever such a kind of defence of the being of God was written by any man before him. If a man would make a judgment upon the genius and the way of his discourse, he might possibly be tempted to fear, that it is persons, rather than things, that are the object of his indignation; and it may be the fate of some to suffer under the infamy of atheism, as it is thought Diagoras did of old, not for denying the Deity, nor for any absurd conceptions of mind concerning it, but for deriding and contemning them, who without any interest in, or sense of religion, did foolishly, in idolatrous instances, make a pretence of it in the world. But whatever wickedness or miscarriages of this nature our author hath observed, his zeal

against them were greatly to be commended, but that it is not in that only instance wherein he allows of the exercise of that virtue. Let it then be his anger or indignation, or what he pleases, that he may not miss of his due praises and commendation. Only I must say, that I question whether to charge persons inclined to atheism with profaning Johnson and Fletcher, as well as the Holy Scriptures, be a way of proceeding probably suited to their conviction or reduction.

It seems also that those who are here chastised do vent their atheism in scoffing and drollery, jesting, and such like contemptible efforts of wit, that may take for a while amongst little and unlearned people, and immediately evaporate. I am afraid more of those who, under pretences of sober reason, do vent and maintain opinions and principles that have a direct tendency to give an open admission unto atheism in the minds of men, than of such fooleries. When others' fury and raving cruelties succeeded not, he alone prevailed, 'qui solus accessit sobrius ad perdendam remp.' One principle contended for as rational and true, which if admitted will insensibly seduce the mind unto, and justify a practice ending in atheism, is more to be feared, than ten thousand jests and scoffs against religion, which methinks, amongst men of any tolerable sobriety, should easily be buried under contempt and scorn. And our author may do well to consider whether he hath not, unwittingly I presume, in some instances, so expressed and demeaned himself, as to give no small advantage to those corrupt inclinations unto atheism, which abound in the hearts of men. Are not men taught here to keep the liberty of their minds and judgments to themselves, whilst they practise that which they approve not, nor can do so; which is directly to act against the light and conviction of conscience? And yet an associate of his in his present design, in a modest and free conference, tells us, that there is 'not a wider step to atheism than to do any thing against conscience;' and informs his friend, that 'dissent out of grounds that appear to any founded on the will of God, is conscience;' but against such a conscience, the light, judgment, and conviction of it, are men here taught to practise; and thereby, in the judgment of that author, are instructed unto atheism. And indeed if once men find

themselves at liberty to practise contrary to what is prescribed unto them in the name and authority of God, as all things are which conscience requires, it is not long that they will retain any regard of him, or reverence unto him. It hath hitherto been the judgment of all who have inquired into these things, that the great concern of the glory of God in the world, the interest of kings and rulers, of all governments whatever, the good and welfare of private persons, lies in nothing more, than in preserving conscience from being debauched in the conducting principles of it; and in keeping up its due respect to the immediate sovereignty of God over it in all things. Neither ever was there a more horrid attempt upon the truth of the gospel, all common morality, and the good of mankind, than that which some of late years or ages have been engaged in, by suggesting in their casuistical writings such principles for the guidance of the consciences of men, as in sundry particular instances might set them free, as to practice, from the direct and immediately influencing authority of God in his word. And yet I doubt not but it may be made evident, that all their principles in conjunction are scarce of so pernicious a tendency as this one general theorem, that men may lawfully act in the worship of God, or otherwise, against the light, dictates, or convictions of their own consciences. Exempt conscience from an absolute, immediate, entire, universal dependence on the authority, will, and judgment of God, according to what conceptions it hath of them, and you disturb the whole harmony of divine Providence in the government of the world, and break the first link of that great chain whereon all religion and government in the world do depend. Teach men to be like Naaman the Syrian, to believe only in the God of Israel, and to worship him according to his appointment by his own choice, and from a sense of duty, yet also to bow in the house of Rimmon, contrary to his light and conviction, out of compliance with his master; or with the men of Samaria to fear the Lord, but to worship their idols, and they will not fail at one time or other, rather to seek after rest in restless atheism, than to live in a perpetual conflict with themselves, or to cherish an everlasting sedition in their own bosoms.

I shall not much reflect upon those expressions which

our author is pleased to vent his indignation by; such as 'religious rage and fury, religious villany, religious lunacies, serious and conscientious villanies, wildness of godly madness; men lead by the Spirit of God to disturb the public peace; the world filled with a buzz and noise of the Divine Spirit, sanctified fury, sanctified barbarism, pious villanies, godly disobedience, sullen and cross-grained godliness,' with innumerable others of the like kind; which although perhaps he may countenance himself in the use of, from the tacit respect that he hath to the persons whom he intends to vilify and reproach; yet in themselves, and to others, who have not the same apprehensions of their occasion, they tend to nothing but to beget a scorn and derision of all religion, and the profession of it; a humour which will not find where to rest or fix itself, until it comes to be swallowed up in the abyss of atheism.

We are at length arrived at the last act of this tragical preface; and as in our progress we have rather heard a great noise and bluster, than really encountered either true difficulty or danger, so now I confess that weariness of conversing with so many various sounds of the same signification, the sum of all being knaves, villains, fools, will carry me through the remainder of it with some more than ordinary precipitation, as grudging an addition in this kind of employment to those few minutes wherein the preceding remarks were written or dictated.

There are two or three heads which the remainder of this prefatory discourse may be reduced unto. First, a magnificent proclamation of his own achievements, what he hath proved, what he hath done, especially in representing the 'inconsistence of liberty of conscience with the first and fundamental laws of government;' and I am content that he please himself with his own apprehensions, like him who admired at the marvellous feats performed in an empty theatre. For it may be, that upon examination it will be found, that there is scarce in his whole discourse any one argument offered at that hath the least seeming cogency towards such an end. Whether you take liberty of conscience for liberty of judgment, which himself confesseth uncontrollable, or liberty of practice upon indulgence, which he seems to oppose, an impartial reader will, I doubt, be so far

from finding the conclusion mentioned to be evinced, as he will scarcely be able to satisfy himself that there are any premises that have a tendency thereunto. But I suppose he must extremely want an employment, who will design himself a business in endeavouring to dispossess him of his self-pleasing imagination. Yea, he seems not to have pleaded his own cause absurdly at Athens, who giving the city the news of a victory when they had received a fatal defeat, affirmed that public thanks were due to him for affording them two days of mirth and jollity, before the tidings came of their ill success, which was more than they were ever like to see again in their lives. And there being as much satisfaction in a fancied as a real success, though useless and failing, we shall leave our author in the highest contentment that thoughts of this nature can afford him. However, it may not be amiss to mind him of that good old counsel, 'Let not him that girdeth on his armour boast like him that putteth it off.'

Another part of his oration is to decry the folly of that brutish apprehension that men can possibly live peaceably and quietly if they enjoy the liberty of their consciences; where he fears not to affirm, that it is more eligible to tolerate the highest debaucheries than liberty for men to worship God according to what they apprehend he requires: whence some severe persons would be too apt, it may be, to make a conjecture of his own inclinations; for it is evident that he is not absolutely insensible of self-interest in what he doth or writes. But the contrary to what he asserts being a truth at this day written with the beams of the sun in many nations of Europe, let envy, malice, fear, and revenge suggest what they please otherwise; and the nature of the thing itself denied being built upon the best, greatest, and surest foundations and warranty that mankind hath to build on, or trust unto, for their peace and security, I know not why its denial was here ventured at, unless it were to embrace an opportunity once more to give vent to the remainders of his indignation, by revilings and reproaches which I had hoped had been now exhausted.

But these things are but collateral to his principal design in this close of his declamation; and this is, the removal of an objection, that 'liberty of conscience would conduce

much to the improvement of trade in the nation.' It is known that many persons of great wisdom and experience, and who, as it is probable, have had more time to consider the state and proper interest of this nation, and have spent more pains in the weighing of all things conducing thereunto than our author hath done, are of this mind and judgment. But he at once strikes them and their reasons dumb, by drawing out his Gorgon's head; that he hath proved it inconsistent with government, and so it must needs be a foolish and silly thing to talk of its usefulness to trade. 'Verum, ad populum phalera;' if great blustering words, dogmatical assertions, uncouth, unproved principles, accompanied with a pretence of contempt and scorn of all exceptions and oppositions to what is said, with the persons of them that make them, may be esteemed proofs, our author can prove what he pleaseth, and he is to be thought to have proved whatever he affirms himself so to have done. If sober reason, experience, arguments derived from common acknowledged principles of truth, if a confirmation of deductions from such principles by confessed and commonly approved instances, are necessary to make up convincing proofs in matters of this nature and importance, we are yet to seek for them, notwithstanding any thing that hath been offered by this author, or as far as I can conjecture is likely so to be. In the mean time I acknowledge many parts of his discourse to be singularly remarkable. His insinuation, 'that the affairs of the kingdom are not in a fixed and established condition, that we are distracted amongst ourselves with a strange variety of jealousies and animosities,' and such like expressions, as if divulged in a book printed without licence, would, and that justly, be looked on as seditious, are the foundations that he proceedeth upon. Now as I am confident that there is very little ground, or none at all, for these insinuations, so the public disposing of the minds of men to fears, suspicions, and apprehensions of unseen dangers by such means, becomes them only who care not what disadvantage they cast others, nay, their rulers under, so they may compass and secure their own private ends and concerns.

But yet not content to have expressed his own real or pretended apprehensions, he proceeds to manifest his scorn

of those, or his smiling at them, who 'with mighty projects labour for the improvement of trade;' which the council appointed, as I take it, by his majesty thence denominated, is more concerned in than the nonconformists, and may do well upon this information, finding themselves liable to scorn, to desist from such a useless and contemptible employment. They may now know, that to erect and encourage trading combinations is only to build so many nests of faction and sedition; for he says, 'there is not any sort of people so inclinable to seditious practices as the trading part of a nation, and that their pride and arrogance naturally increase with the improvement of their stock.' Besides 'the fanatic party,' as he says, 'live in these greater societies, and it is a very odd and preposterous folly to design the enriching of that sort of people; for wealth doth but only pamper and encourage their presumption; and he is a very silly man, and understands nothing of the follies, passions, and inclinations of human nature, who sees not that there is no creature so ungovernable as a wealthy fanatic.'

It cannot be denied, but that this modern policy runs contrary to the principles and experience of former ages. To preserve industrious men in a peaceable way of improving their own interests, whereby they might partake in their own and family concerns, of the good and advantages of government, hath been, by the weak and silly men of former generations, esteemed the most rational way of inducing their minds unto peaceable thoughts and resolutions. For as the wealth of men increaseth, so do their desires and endeavours after all things and ways whereby it may be secured; that so they may not have spent their labour and the vigour of their spirits, with reference unto their own good and that of their posterity, in vain. Yea, most men are found to be of Issachar's temper, who when he saw, 'that rest was good, and the land pleasant,' wherein his own advantages lay, 'bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute;' 'fortes,' and 'miseri,' have heretofore been only feared, and not such as found satisfaction to their desires in the increases and successes of their endeavours. And as Cæsar said, he feared not those fat and corpulent persons, Antony and Dolabella, but those pale and lean discontented ones, Brutus and Cassius; so men have been thought to be far less dangerous, or

to be suspected in government, who are well clothed with their own wealth and concerns, than such as have nothing but themselves to lose, and by reason of their straits and distresses, do scarce judge them worth the keeping.

And hath this gentleman really considered what the meaning of that word trade is, and what is the concernment of this nation in it? or is he so fond of his own notions and apprehensions, as to judge it meet that the vital spirits and blood of the kingdom should be offered in sacrifice unto them? Solomon tells us, that the 'profit of the earth is for all, and the king himself is served by the field;' and we may truly in England say the same of trade: all men know what respect unto it there is in the revenues of the crown, and how much they are concerned in its growth and promotion; the rents of all, from the highest to the lowest, that have an interest in the soil are regulated by it, and rise and fall with it; nor is there any possibility to keep them up to their present proportion and standard, much less to advance them, without the continuance of trade in its present condition at least, nay, without a steady endeavour for its increase, furtherance, and promotion. Noblemen and gentlemen must be contented to eat their own beef and mutton at home, if trade decay; to keep up their ancient and present splendour, they will find no way or means. Corporations are known to be the most considerable and significant bodies of the common people, and herein lies their being and bread; to diminish or discountenance their trade, is to starve them, and discourage all honest industry in the world. It was a sad desolation that not long since befell the great city by fire: yet through the good providence of God, under the peaceable government of his majesty, it is rising out of its ashes, with a new signal beauty and lustre. But that consumption and devastation of it, which the pursuit of this counsel will inevitably produce, would prove fatal and irreparable. And as the interest of all the several parts of the commonwealth do depend on the trade of the people amongst ourselves, so the honour, power, and security of the whole in reference unto foreign nations, are resolved also into the same principles; for as our soil is but small in comparison of some of our neighbours, and the numbers of our people no ways to

be compared with theirs, so if we should forego the advantages of trade for which we have opportunities, and unto which the people of this nation have inclinations, above any country or nation in the world, we should quickly find how unequal the competition between them and us would be: for even our naval force, which is the honour of the king, the security of his kingdoms, the terror of his enemies, oweth its rise and continuance unto that preparation of persons employed therein, which is made by the trade of the nation. And if the counsel of this author should be followed, to suspend all thoughts of the supportment, encouragement, and furtherance of trade, until all men by the severities of penalties should be induced to a uniformity in religion; I doubt not but our envious neighbours would as readily discern the concernment of their malice and ill-will therein, as Hannibal did his, in the action of the Roman general, who at the battle of Cannæ, according to their usual discipline (but fatally at that time misapplied), caused in the great distress of the army, his horsemen to alight and fight on foot, not considering the advantage of his great and politic enemy, as things then stood, who immediately said, ‘ I had rather he had delivered them all bound unto me,’ though he knew there was enough done to secure his victory.

A

SURVEY OF THE FIRST CHAPTER.

THE author of this discourse seems in this first chapter to design the stating of the controversy, which he intendeth to pursue and handle, (as he expresseth himself, p. 11.) as also to lay down the main foundations of his ensuing superstructure. Nothing could be more regularly projected, nor more suited to the satisfaction of ingenious inquirers into the matters under debate; for those who have any design in reading, beyond a present divertisement of their minds, or entertainment of their fancies, desire nothing more than to have the subject matter which they exercise their thoughts about clearly and distinctly proposed, that a true judgment may be made concerning what men say, and whereof they do affirm. But I fear our author hath fallen under the misadventure of a failure in these projections; at least as unto that certainty, clearness, and perspicuity in the declaration of his conceptions, and expression of his assertions and principles; without which all other ornaments of speech in matters of moment, are of no use or consideration. His language is good and proper, his periods of speech laboured, full, and even; his expressions poignant towards his adversaries, and singly taken, appearing to be very significative and expressive of his mind. But I know not how it is come to pass, that what either through his own defect, as to a due comprehension of the notions whose management he hath undertaken, or out of a design to cloud and obscure his sentiments, and to take the advantage of loose declamatory expressions, it is very hard, if possible, to gather from what he hath written, either what is the true state of the controversy proposed to discussion, or what is the precise determinate sense of those words wherein he proposeth the principles that he proceeds upon. Thus in the title of the book he

asserts the power of the magistrate over the consciences of men; elsewhere confines the whole work and duty of conscience to the inward thoughts and persuasions of the mind, over which the magistrate hath no power at all. 'Conscience itself,' he sometimes says, 'is every man's opinion;' sometimes he calls it an 'imperious faculty,' which surely are not the same; sometimes he pleads for the uncontrollable power of magistrates over religion and the consciences of men; sometimes asserts their ecclesiastical jurisdiction as the same thing, and seemingly all that he intends; whereas, I suppose, no man ever yet defined ecclesiastical jurisdiction to be, 'an uncontrollable power over religion and the consciences of men.' The magistrate's power over religion he asserts frequently, and denieth outward worship to be any part of religion, and at last pleads upon the matter only for his power over outward worship. Every particular virtue he affirms to be such, because it is a resemblance and imitation of some of the divine attributes; yet also teacheth that there may be more virtues, or new ones that were not so, and that to be virtue in one place which is not so in another: sometimes he pleads that the magistrate hath power to impose any religion on the consciences of his subjects, that doth not countenance vice, or disgrace the Deity; and then anon pleads for it in indifferent things, and circumstances of outward worship only. Also that the magistrate may oblige his subjects' consciences to the performance of moral duties, and other duties in religious worship under penalties, and yet punisheth none for their crime and guilt but for the example of others. And many other instances of the like nature may be given. Now, whatever dress of words these things may be set off withal, they savour rankly of crude and undigested notions, not reduced unto such a consistency in his mind, as to suffer him to speak evenly, steadily, and constantly to them. Upon the whole matter, it may not be unmeetly said of his discourses, what Tully said of Rullus's oration about the Agrarian law; 'Concionem advocari jubet; summa cum expectatione concurritur; explicat orationem sane longam et verbis valde bonis; unum erat quod mihi vitiosum videbatur; quod tanta ex frequentia nemo inveniri potuit qui intelligere posset quid diceret. Hoc ille utrum insidiarum causa fecerit, an hoc genere eloquentiæ

delectetur, nescio ; tamen siqui acutiores in concione steterant, de lege Agraria nescio quid voluisse eum dicere suspicabantur.' Many good words it is composed of, many sharp reflections are made on others, a great appearance there is of reason; but besides that it is plain that he treats of the nonconformists and the magistrate's power, and would have this latter exercised about the punishment or destruction of the former (which almost every page expresseth), it is very hard to gather what is the case he speaks unto, or what are the principles he proceeds upon.

The entrance of his discourse is designed to give an account of the great difficulty which he intends to assail, of the controversy that he will handle and debate, and of the difference which he will compose. Here, if any where, accuracy, perspicuity, and a clear distinct direction of the minds of the readers unto a certain just apprehension of the matter in question and difference, ought to be expected. For if the foundation of discourses of this nature be laid in terms general, ambiguous, loose, rhetorical, and flourishing, giving no particular determinate sense of the controversy (for so this is called by our author), all that ensues in the pursuit of what is so laid down, must needs be of the same complexion. And such appears to be the declamatory entrance of this chapter. For instead of laying a solid foundation to erect his superstructure upon, the author seems in it only to have built a castle in the air, that makes a goodly appearance and show, but is of no validity or use. Can he suppose that any man is the wiser, or the more intelligent in the difference about liberty of conscience, the power and duty of magistrates in granting or denying an indulgence unto the exercise of it, by reading an elegant parabolical discourse of two supreme powers, the magistrate and conscience, contesting for sovereignty, in and about no man knows what What conscience is; what liberty of conscience; what it is pleaded for to extend unto; who are concerned in it; whether its plea be resolved absolutely into its own nature and constitution, or into that respect which it hath to another common rule of the minds and conceptions of men in and about the worship of God, is not declared: nor is it easily discernible, what he allows and approves of in his own discourse, and what he introduceth to reflect

upon, and so reject. Page 5. he tells us, that 'conscience is subject and accountable to God alone, that it owns no superior but the Lord of consciences.' And, p. 7. 'That those who make it accountable to none but God alone, do in effect usurp their prince's crown, defy his authority, and acknowledge no governor but themselves.' If it be pleaded that in the first place, not what is, but what is unduly pretended is declared, his words may be as well so expounded in all his ascriptions unto magistrates also; namely, that it is not with them as he asserts, but only it is unduly pretended so to be, as to any thing that appears in the discourse. The distinct consideration of the principles of conscience, and the outward exercise of it, can alone here give any shew of relief. But as no distinction of that nature doth as yet appear, and if rested on, ought to have been produced by any one who understood himself, and intended not to deceive or entangle others, so when it is brought on the stage, its inconsistency to serve the end designed shall be evinced. But that a plea for the consciences of private men (submitting themselves freely and willingly to the supreme power and government of magistrates in all things belonging to public peace and tranquillity), to have liberty to express their obedience unto God in the exercise of his outward worship, should receive such a tragical description of a 'rival supreme power set up against the magistrate to the usurpation of his crown and dignity,' is a new way of stating controversies whether in divinity or policy, which this author judgeth conducing to his design and purpose. And I shall say no more but that those who delight in such a way of writing, and do receive light and satisfaction thereby, do seem to be exercised in a logic that I was never acquainted withal, and which I shall not now inquire after.

What seems to be of real difficulty in this matter which is so rhetorically exaggerated, our blessed Saviour hath stated and determined in one word; 'Give,' saith he, 'unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's;' and this he did, when he gave his disciples command not only to think, judge, and believe according to what he should propose and reveal unto them, but also to observe and do in outward practices whatever he should command them. As he requires all subjection unto the ma-

gistrate in things of his proper cognizance, that is, all things necessary to public peace and tranquillity in this world, the great end of his authority; so he asserts also that there are things of God which are to be observed and practised, even all and every one of his own commands; in a neglect whereof, on any pretence or account, we give not unto God that which is his. And he doubted not, but that these things, these distinct respects to God and man, were exceedingly well consistent, and together directive to the same end of public good. Wherefore passing through the flourishes of this frontispiece with the highest unconcernment, we may enter the fabric itself, where possibly we may find him declaring directly what it is that he asserts in this matter, and contendeth for; and this he doth, p. 10. 'And therefore it is the design of this discourse, by a fair and impartial debate, to compose all these differences, and adjust all these quarrels and contentions, and settle things upon their true and proper foundations; first, by proving it to be absolutely necessary to the peace and government of the world, that the supreme magistrate of every commonwealth should be vested with a power to govern and conduct the consciences of subjects in affairs of religion.'

I am sure our author will not be surprised, if after he hath reported the whole party whom he opposeth, as a company of silly, foolish, illiterate persons, one of them should so far acknowledge his own stupidity, as to profess that, after the consideration of this declaration of his intention and mind, he is yet to seek for the direct and determinate sense of his words, and for the principle that he designs the confirmation of. I doubt not but that the magistrate hath all that power which is absolutely necessary for the preservation of public peace and tranquillity in the world; but if men may be allowed to fancy what they please to be necessary unto that end, and thence to make their own measures of that power which is to be ascribed unto him, no man knows what bounds will be fixed unto that ocean wherein the leviathians they have framed in their imaginations may sport themselves. Some will perhaps think it necessary to this purpose, that the magistrate should have power to declare and determine whether there be a God or no; whether if there be, it be necessary he should be worshipped or

no; whether any religion be needful in, or useful to, the world; and if there be, then to determine what all subjects shall believe and practise from first to last in the whole of it. And our author hopes that some are of his mind. Others may confine it to lesser things, according as their own interest doth call upon them so to do; though they are not able to assign a clear distinction between what is subjected unto him, and what may plead an exemption from his authority. He indeed who is the fountain and original of all power, hath both assigned its proper end, and fully suited it to the attainment thereof. And if the noise of men's lusts, passions, and interests, were but a little silenced, we should quickly hear the harmonious consenting voice of human nature itself, declaring the just proportion that is between the grant of power and its end; and undeniably express it in all the instances of it. For as the principle of rule and subjection is natural to us, concreated with us, and indispensably necessary to human society in all the distinctions it is capable of, and the relations whence those distinctions arise; so nature itself, duly attended unto, will not fail by the reason of things, to direct us unto all that is essential unto it, and necessary unto its end. Arbitrary fictions of ends of government, and what is necessary thereunto, influenced by present interest, and arising from circumstances confined to one place, time, or nation, are not to be imposed on the nature of government itself; which hath nothing belonging unto it but what inseparably accompanieth mankind as sociable.

But to let this pass; the authority here particularly asserted is a 'power in the supreme magistrate to govern and guide the consciences of his subjects in affairs of religion.' Let any man duly consider these expressions, and if he be satisfied by them as to the sense of the controversy under debate, I shall acknowledge that he is wiser than I, which is very easy for any one to be. What are the 'affairs of religion' here intended, all or some? Whether in religion, or about it; what are the consciences of men, and how exercised about these things; what it is to govern and conduct them; with what power, by what means this may be done; I am at a loss for aught that yet is here declared. There is a guidance, conduct, yea, government of the con-

sciences of men, by instructions and directions in a due proposal of rational and spiritual motives for those ends; such as is that which is vested in, and exercised by, the guides of the church; and that in subjection to, and dependance on, Christ alone, as hath been hitherto apprehended; though some now seem to have a mind to change their master, and to take up 'præsente Numine' who may be of more advantage to them. That the magistrate hath also power so to govern and conduct the consciences of his subjects in his way of administration, that is by ordering them to be taught, instructed, and guided in their duty, I know none that doth deny. So did Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii. 7—9. But it seems to be a government and guidance of another nature that is here intended. To deliver ourselves therefore from the deceit and entanglement of these general expressions, and that we may know what to speak unto, we must seek for a declaration of their sense and importance from what is elsewhere in their pursuit affirmed and explained by their author.

His general assertion is, as was observed, that 'the magistrate hath power over the consciences of his subjects in religion,' as appears in the title of his book; here, p. 10. that power is said to be 'to govern and conduct their consciences in religious affairs:' p. 13. 'that religion is subject to his dominion as well as all other affairs of state:' p. 27. 'it is a sovereignty over men's consciences in matters of religion, and this universal, absolute, and uncontrollable.' Matters of religion are as uncontrollably subject to the supreme power, as all other civil concerns; 'he may if he please reserve the exercise of the priesthood to himself;' p. 32. that is, what now in religion corresponds unto the ancient priesthood, as the ordering bishops and priests, administering sacraments and the like; as the Papists in Queen Elizabeth's time did commonly report, in their usual manner, that it was done by a woman amongst us, by a fiction of such principles as begin it seems now to be owned. That if this 'power of the government of religion be not universal and unlimited it is useless;' p. 35. that this 'power is not derived from Christ, nor any grant of his, but is antecedent to his coming, or any power given unto him or granted by him;' p. 40. 'Magistrates have a power to make that a

particular of the divine law, which God had not made so;' p. 80. 'and to introduce new duties in the most important parts of religion. So that there is a public conscience which men are in things of a public concern (relating to the worship of God) to attend unto and not to their own. And if there be any sin in the command, he that imposed it shall answer for it, and not I whose whole duty it is to obey;' p. 308. Hence the command of 'authority will warrant obedience, and obedience will hallow my actions, and excuse me from sin;' ibid. Hence it follows, that whatever the magistrate commands in religion, his authority doth so immediately affect the consciences of men, that they are bound to observe it on the pain of the greatest sin and punishment; and he may appoint and command whatever he pleaseth in religion, 'that doth not either countenance vice, or disgrace the Deity;' p. 85. And many other expressions are there of the general assertion before laid down.

This, therefore, seems to me, and to the most impartial considerations of this discourse that I could bring unto it, to be the doctrine or opinion proposed and advanced for the quieting and composing of the great tumults described in its entrance; namely, that the supreme magistrate in every nation hath power to order and appoint what religion his subjects shall profess and observe, or what he pleaseth in religion as to the worship of God required in it, provided that he 'enjoineth nothing that countenance vice, or disgrace the Deity;' and thereby binds their consciences to profess and observe that which is by him so appointed (and nothing else are they to observe), making it their duty in conscience so to do, and the highest crime or sin to do any thing to the contrary; and that whatever the precise truth in these matters be, or whatever be the apprehensions of their own consciences concerning them. Now if our author can produce any law, usage, or custom of this kingdom, any statute or act of parliament, any authentic record, any acts or declarations of our kings, any publicly authorized writing before or since the reformation, declaring, asserting, or otherwise approving the power and authority described to belong unto, to be claimed or exercised by, the kings of this nation, I will faithfully promise him never to write one word against it, although I am sure I shall never be of that mind.

And if I mistake not in a transient reflection on these principles, compared with those which the church of England hath formerly pleaded against them who opposed her constitutions, they are utterly by them cast out of all consideration; and this one notion is advanced in the room of all the foundations which for so many years her defenders (as wise and as learned as this author), have been building upon. But this is not my concernment to examine; I shall leave it unto them whose it is, and whose it will be made appear to be, if we are again necessitated to engage in this dispute.

For the present be it granted, that it is the duty, and in the power of every supreme magistrate, to order and determine what religion, what way, what modes in religion shall be allowed, publicly owned and countenanced, and by public revenue maintained in his dominions. That is, this is allowed with respect to all pretensions of other sovereigns, or of his own subjects; with respect unto God, it is his truth alone, the religion by him revealed, and the worship by him appointed, that he can so allow or establish. The rule that holds in private persons with respect to the public magistrate, holds in him with respect unto God. 'Illud possumus quod jure possumus.' It is also agreed, that no men, no individual person, no order or society of men, are either in their persons or any of their outward concerns, exempted, or may be so on the account of religion, from his power and jurisdiction; nor any causes that are liable unto a legal, political disposal and determination; it is also freely acknowledged that whatever such a magistrate doth determine about the observances of religion, and under what penalties soever, his subjects are bound to observe what he doth so command and appoint, unless by general or especial rules their consciences are obliged to a dissent or contrary observation by the authority of God and his word: in this case they are to keep their souls entire in their spiritual subjection unto God, and quietly and peaceably to bear the troubles and inconveniences which on the account thereof may befall them, without the least withdrawing of their obedience from the magistrate. And in this state of things as there is no necessity or appearance of it, that any man should be brought into such a condition, as wherein sin on the one hand or the other cannot be avoided; so that state of things will

probably occur in the world, as it hath done in all ages hitherto, that men may be necessitated to sin or suffer.

To wind up the state of this controversy, we say, that antecedent to the consideration of the power of the magistrate, and all the influence that it hath upon men or their consciences, there is a superior determination of what is true, what false in religion, what right and what wrong in the worship of God, wherein the guidance of the consciences of men doth principally depend, and whereinto it was ultimately resolved. This gives an obligation or liberty unto them, antecedent unto the imposition of the magistrate, of whose command, and our actual obedience unto them in these things, it is the rule and measure. And I think there is no principle, no common presumption of nature, nor dictate of reason more evident, known, or confessed than this, that whatever God commands us in his worship or otherwise, that we are to do; and whatever he forbids us, that we are not to do, be the things themselves in our eye great or small.

Neither is there any difference in these things with respect unto the way or manner of the declaration of the will of God; whether it be by innate common light, or by revelation, all is one; the authority and will of God in all is to be observed. Yea, a command of God made known by revelation (the way which is most contended about), may suspend, as to any particular instance, the greatest command that we are obliged unto by the law of nature in reference unto one another, as it did in the precept given to Abraham for the sacrificing of his son. And we shall find our author himself setting up the supremacy of conscience in opposition unto, and competition with, that of the magistrate (though with no great self-consistency) ascribing the pre-eminence and prevalency in obligation unto that of conscience, and that in the principal and most important duties of religion and human life. Such are all those moral virtues which have in their nature a resemblance of the divine perfections, wherein he placeth the substance of religion; with respect unto these, he so setteth up the throne of conscience as to affirm, that if any thing be commanded by the magistrate against them, to disobey him is no sin, but a duty; and we shall find the case to be the same in matters of mere revelation. For what God commands that he commands, by what way soever

that command be made known to us. And there is no consideration that can add any thing to the obligatory power and efficacy of infinite authority. So that where the will of God is the formal reason of our obedience, it is all one how or by what means it is discovered unto us. Whatever we are instructed in by innate reason or by revelation, the reason why we are bound by it is neither the one nor the other, but the authority of God in both.

But we must return unto the consideration of the sentiments of our author in this matter as before laid down. The authority ascribed to the civil magistrate being as hath been expressed; it will be very hard for any one to distinguish between it and the sovereignty that the Lord Christ himself hath in and over his church; yea, if there be any advantage on either side, or a comparative pre-eminence, it will be found to be cast upon that of the magistrate. Is the Lord Christ the Lord of the souls and consciences of men? Hath he dominion over them to rule them in the things of the worship of God? It is so with the magistrates also; he hath a universal power over the consciences of his subjects. Doth the Lord Christ require his disciples to do and observe in the worship of God whatever he commanded them? So also may the magistrate, the rule and conduct of conscience in these matters belonging unto him; provided that he command nothing that may countenance vice, or disgrace the Deity; which, with reverence be it spoken, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, not only on the account of the perfection and rectitude of his own nature, but also of his commission from the Father, could not do. Is the authority of Christ the formal reason making obedience necessary to his commands and precepts? So is the authority of the magistrate in reference unto what he requires. Do men therefore sin if they neglect the observance of the commands of Christ in the worship of God, because of his immediate authority so to command them binding their consciences? So do men sin if they omit or neglect to do what the magistrate requires in the worship of God because of his authority, without any farther respect. Hath the Lord Christ instituted two sacraments in the worship of God, that is outward visible signs, or symbols, of inward invisible or spiritual grace? The magistrate if he please may institute and appoint

twenty under the names of significant ceremonies; that is 'outward visible signs of inward spiritual grace,' which alone is the significancy contended about. Hath the magistrate this his authority in and over religion and the consciences of men from Jesus Christ? No more than Christ hath his authority from the magistrate; for he holds it by the law of nature antecedent to the promise and coming of Christ. Might Christ in his own person administer the holy things of the church of God? Not in the church of the Jews, for he 'sprang of the tribe of Judah, concerning which nothing was spoken as to the priesthood;' only he might in that of the gospel, but hath judged meet to commit the actual administration of them to others. So it is with the magistrate also. Thus far then Christ and the magistrate seem to stand on even or equal terms; but there are two things remaining that absolutely turn the scale and cast the advantage on the magistrate's side. For, first, Men may do and practise many things in the worship of God which the Lord Christ hath nowhere, nor by any means required; yea, to think that his word, or the revelation of his mind and will therein, is the sole and adequate rule of religious worship, is reported as an opinion foolish, absurd, and impious, and destructive of all government. If this be not supposed, not only the whole design of our author in this book is defeated, but our whole controversy also is composed and at an end. But on the other hand, no man must do or practise any thing in that way, but what is prescribed, appointed, and commanded by the magistrate, upon pain of sin, schism, rebellion, and all that follows thereon. To leave this unasserted is all that the nonconformists would desire in order unto peace. Comprehension and indulgence would ensue thereon. Here I think the magistrate hath the advantage. But that which follows will make it yet more evident; for secondly, Suppose the magistrate require any thing to be done and observed in the worship of God, and the Lord Christ require the quite contrary in a man's own apprehension, so that he is as well satisfied in his apprehension of his mind as he can be of any thing that is proposed to his faith and conscience in the word of God; in this case he is to obey magistrate, and not Christ, as far as I can learn; unless all confusion and disorder be admitted an

entrance into the world. Yea, but this seems directly contrary to that rule of the apostles, which hath such an evidence and power of rational conviction attending it, that they refer it to the judgment of their adversaries, and those persons of as perverse corrupt minds and prejudicate engagements against them and their cause, as ever lived in the world; namely, 'Whether it be meet to obey God or man, judge ye.' But we are told, that 'this holds only in greater matters;' the logic (by the way) of which distinction, is as strange as its divinity. For if the formal reason of the difference intimated, arise from the comparison between the authority of God and man, it holds equally as to all things small or great that they may be oppositely concerned in. Besides, who shall judge what is small, or what is great, in things of this nature? 'Cave ne titubes.' Grant but the least judgment to private men themselves in this matter, and the whole fabric tumbles; if the magistrate be judge of what is great and of what is little, we are still where we were without hopes of delivery. And this to me is a notable instance of the pre-eminence of the magistrate above Christ in this matter. Some of the old Irish have a proverbial speech amongst them, 'That if Christ had not been Christ when he was Christ, Patrick had been Christ;' but it seems now that taking it for granted that he was Christ, yet we have another that is so also; that is lord over the souls and consciences of men; and what can be said more of him, 'who sits in the temple of God, and shews himself to be God?'

As we formerly said, nonconformists who are unacquainted with the mysteries of things of this nature, must needs desire to know whether these be the avowed principles of the church of England, or whether they are only inventions to serve a present turn of the pursuit of some men's designs. Are all the old pleas of the 'jus divinum' of episcopacy, of example and direction apostolical, of a parity of reason between the condition of the church whilst under extraordinary officers, and whilst under ordinary; of the power of the church to appoint ceremonies for decency and order, of the consistency of Christian liberty with the necessary practice of indifferent things, of the pattern of the churches of old, which (whether duly or otherwise we do not now determine) have been insisted on in this cause, swallowed all up in this

abyss of magistratical omnipotency, which plainly renders them useless and unprofitable? How unhappy hath it been that the Christian world was not sooner blessed with this great discovery of the only way and means of putting a final end unto all religious contests? That he should not until now appear,

> Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
> Præstrinxit stellas, exortus ut ætherius sol.

But every age produceth not a Columbus. Many indeed have been the disputes of learned men about the power of magistrates in and concerning religion. With us it is stated in the recorded actings of our sovereign princes, in the oath of supremacy, and the acts of parliament concerning it, with other authentic writings explanatory thereof. Some have denied him any concern herein; our author is none of them; but rather like the phrenetic gentleman who, when he was accused in former days for denying the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament, replied in his own defence, that he 'believed him to be present booted and spurred as he rode to Capernaum.' He hath brought him in booted and spurred, yea, armed cap-a-pie into the church of God, and given all power into his hands to dispose of the worship of God according to his own will and pleasure. And that not with respect unto outward order only, but with direct obligation upon the consciences of men.

But doubtless it is the wisdom of sovereign princes to beware of this sort of enemies; persons who to promote their own interest make ascriptions of such things unto them, as they cannot accept of without the utmost hazard of the displeasure of God. Is it meet that to satisfy the desires of any, they should invade the prerogative of God, or set themselves down at his right hand in the throne of his only-begotten son? I confess they are no way concerned in what others for their advantage' sake, as they suppose, will ascribe unto them, which they may sufficiently disown by scorn and silence. Nor can their sin involve them in any guilt. It was not the vain acclamation of the multitude unto Herod, 'the voice of God and not of man,' but his own arrogant satisfaction in that blasphemous assignation of divine glory to him, that exposed him to the judgments and vengeance of God. When the princes of Israel found

by the answer of the Reubenites that they had not transgressed against the law of God's worship, in adding unto it or altering of it, which they knew would have been a provocation not to have been passed over without a recompense of revenge; they replied unto them, 'Now have you delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord;' and it is to be desired that all the princes of the Israel of God in the world, all Christian potentates, would diligently watch against giving admission unto any such insinuations as would deliver them into the hand of the Lord.

For my own part, such is my ignorance, that I know not that any magistrate from the foundation of the world, unless it were Nebuchadnezzar, Caius Caligula, Domitian, and persons like to them, ever claimed or pretended to exercise the power here assigned unto them. The instances of the laws and edicts of Constantine in the matters of religion and the worship of God, of Theodosius and Gratian, Arcadius, Martian, and other emperors of the east remaining in the Code and Novels; the capitular of the western emperors, and laws of Gothish kings, the right of ecclesiastical jurisdiction inherent in the imperial crown of this nation, and occasionally exercised in all ages, are of no concernment in this matter. For no man denies but that it is the duty of the supreme magistrate to protect and farther the true religion and right worship of God, by all ways and means suited and appointed of God thereunto. To encourage the professors thereof, to protect them from wrong and violence, to secure them in the performance of their duties, is doubtless incumbent on them. Whatever under pretence of religion brings actual disturbance unto the peace of mankind, they may coerce and restrain. When religion, as established in any nation by law, doth or may interest the professors of it, or guides in it, in any privileges, advantages, or secular emoluments, which are subject and liable, as all human concerns, to doubts, controversies, and litigious contests in their security and disposal, all these things depend merely and solely on the power of the magistrate, by whose authority they are originally granted, and by whose jurisdictive power both the persons vested with them, and themselves are disposable. But for an absolute power over the consciences of men to bind or oblige them formally

thereby, to do whatever they shall require in the worship of God, so as to make it their sin deserving eternal damnation not so to do, without any consideration whether the things are true or false, according to the mind of God, or otherwise, yea, though they are apprehended by them who are so obliged to practise them to be contrary to the will of God, that this hath hitherto been claimed by any magistrate, unless such as those before mentioned, I am yet to seek. And the case is the same with respect unto them who are not satisfied that what is so prescribed unto them will be accepted with God. For whereas in all that men do in the worship of God, they ought to be fully persuaded of its acceptableness to God in their own minds, seeing 'whatever is not of faith is sin;' he that doubteth is in a very little better capacity to serve God on such injunctions, than he who apprehendeth them to be directly contrary to his mind.

If an edict were drawn up for the settlement of religion and religious worship in any Christian nation, according to the principles and directions before laid down, it may be there would be no great strife in the world by whom it should be first owned and espoused. For it must be of this importance.

'Whereas we have a universal and absolute power over the consciences of all our subjects in things appertaining to the worship of God; so that if we please we can introduce new duties, never yet heard of, in the most important parts of religion, (p. 80.) and may impose on them in the practice of religion and divine worship what we please; so that in our judgment it doth not countenance vice, nor disgrace the Deity, (p. 85.) and whereas this power is naturally inherent in us, not given or granted unto us by Jesus Christ, but belonged to us, or our predecessors before ever he was born, nor is expressed in the Scripture, but rather supposed; and this being such as that we ourselves if we would, whether we be man or woman' (here France must be excepted by virtue of the Salique law, though the whole project be principally calculated for that meridian), 'might exercise the special offices and duties of religion in our own person, especially that of the priesthood, though we are pleased to transfer the exercise of it unto others; and whereas all our prescriptions, impositions, and

injunctions, in these things, do immediately affect and bind the consciences of our subjects because they are ours, whether they be right or wrong, true or false, so long as in our judgment they neither, as was said, countenance vice nor disgrace the Deity, we do enact and ordain as followeth.'

(Here, if you please, you may intersert the scheme of religion given us by our author in his second chapter, and add unto it, 'that because sacrifices were a way found out by honest men of old, to express their gratitude unto God thereby, so great and necessary a part of our religious duty; it be enjoined that the use of them be again revived; seeing there is nothing in them that offends against the bounds prescribed to the power to be expressed; and that men in all places do offer up bulls and goats, sheep and fowls, to God;' with as many other institutions of the like nature, as shall be thought meet.) Hereunto add,

'Now our express will and pleasure is, that every man may, and do think and judge what he pleaseth concerning the things enjoined and enacted by us; for what have we to do with their thoughts and judgments? they are under the empire and dominion of conscience, which we cannot invade if we would; they may if they please judge them inconvenient, foolish, absurd, yea, contrary to the mind, will, and law of God: our only intention, will, and pleasure is, to bind them to the constant observation and practice of them, and that under the penalties of hanging and damnation.'

I know not any expression in such an impious and futilous edict, that may not be warranted out of the principles of this discourse; the main parts of it being composed out of the words and phrases of it, and those used, to the best of my understanding, in the sense fixed to them by our author.

Now, as was said before, I suppose Christian princes will not be earnest in their contests, who shall first own the authority intimated, and express it in a suitable exercise. And if any one of them should put forth his hand unto it, he will find that

> —— Furiarum maxima juxta
> Accubat, et manibus prohibet contingere mensas.

There is one who lays an antecedent claim to a sole interest in this power, and that bottomed on other manner of preten-

sions than any as yet have been pleaded in their behalf. For the power and authority here ascribed unto princes, is none other but that which is claimed by the pope of Rome with some few enlargements, and appropriated unto him by his canonists and courtiers. Only here the old gentleman (as he is called by our author) hath the advantage; that beside the precedency of his claim, it being entered on record at least six or seven hundred years before any proctor or advocate appeared in the behalf of princes, he hath forestalled them all in the pretence of infallibility; which doubtless is a matter of singular use in the exercise of the power contended about. For some men are so peevish as to think that thus to deal with religion and the consciences of men, belongs to none but him, who is absolutely, yea, essentially so, that is infallible. For as we have now often said (as contrary to their design men in haste oftentimes speak the same things over and over) as to all ecclesiastical jurisdiction over persons and causes ecclesiastical, and the sovereign disposal of all the civil and political concernments of religion which is vested in the imperial crown of this nation, and by sundry acts of parliament is declared so to be, I shall be always ready to plead the right of our kings, and all Christian kings whatever, against the absurd pleas and pretences of the pope; so as to this controversy between him and such princes as shall think meet to contend with him about it, concerning the power over the consciences of men before described, I shall not interpose myself in the scuffle; as being fully satisfied they are contending about that which belongs to neither of them.

But what reason is there, why this power should not be extended unto the inward thoughts and apprehensions of men about the worship of God, as well as the expression of them in pure spiritual acts of that worship? The power asserted I presume will be acknowledged to be from God; though I can scarce meet with the communication and derivation of it from him in this discourse. But whereas, it is granted on all hands, that 'the powers that be are of God,' and that none can have authority over another, unless it be originally given him from above; I desire to be informed why the other part of the power mentioned, namely, over the thoughts, judgments, and apprehensions of men in the things of the

worship of God, should not be invested in the magistrate also; that so he having declared what is to be believed, thought, and judged in such things, all men should be obliged so to believe, think, and judge; for this power God can give, and hath given it unto Jesus Christ. I presume it will be said, that this was no way needful for the preservation of peace in human society, which is the end for which all this power is vested in the magistrate. For let men believe, think, and judge what they please, so long as their outward actings are, or may be overruled, there is no danger of any public disturbance. But this seems to be a mighty uneasy condition for mankind; namely, to live continually in a contradiction between their judgments and their practices, which in this case is allowed to be incident unto them. Constantly to judge one way best and most according to the mind of God in his worship, and constantly to practise another, will, it is to be feared, prove like the conflicting of vehement vapours with their contrary qualities, that at one time or other will produce an earthquake. How then if men, weary of this perplexing distorting condition of things in their minds, should be provoked to run to excesses and inordinate courses for their freedom and rest, such as our author excellently displays in all their hideous colours and appearances, and which are really pernicious to human policy and society? Were it not much better that all these inconveniences had been prevented in the first instance, by taking care that the faith, thoughts, persuasions, and judgments of all subjects about the things of God, should be absolutely bound up unto the declared conceptions of their rulers in these matters? Let it not be pretended that this is impossible, and contrary to the natural liberty of the minds of men, as rational creatures guiding and determining themselves according to their own reason of things and understandings. For do but fix the declared will of the ruler, in the room and place of divine revelation (which is no hard matter to do, which some actually do universally, and our author as to a great share and proportion), and the obligation sought after to prevent all inconveniences in government, falls as full and directly upon the minds, thoughts, and judgments of men, as upon any of their outward actions. And this, for the substance of it, is now pleaded for; seeing it is pre-

tended that in all things dubious, where men cannot satisfy themselves that it is the will of God that they should do a thing or no, the declaration of the magistrate determines not only their practice, but their judgment also, and gives them that full persusion of their minds which is indispensably required unto their acting in such things; and that faith which frees them from sin; 'for he that doubteth, is damned if he eat.'

But it will be said, that there will be no need hereof; for let men think and judge what they please, whilst they are convinced and satisfied that it is their duty not to practise any thing outwardly in religion but what is prescribed by their rulers, it is not possible that any public evil should ensue upon their mental conceptions only. We observed before, that the condition described is exceedingly uneasy; which I suppose will not be denied by men who have seriously considered, what it is either to judge or practise any thing that lies before them with reference unto the judgment of God. And that which should tie men up to rest perpetually in such a restless state, is as it seems a mere conviction of their duty. They ought to be, and are supposed to be, convinced that it is their duty to maintain the liberty of their minds and judgments, but to submit in their outward practice universally to the laws of men that are over them. And this sense and conviction of duty, is a sufficient security unto public tranquillity, in all that contrariety and opposion of sentiments unto established religion and forms of worship that may be imagined. But if this be so, why will not the same conviction and sense of duty restrain them, who do peaceably exercise the worship of God according to the light and dictates of their consciences, from any actings whatever that may tend to the disturbance of the public peace? Duty, nakedly considered, is even as such, the greatest obligation on the minds of men; and the great security of others in their actings ariseth from thence. But the more it is influenced and advantaged by outward considerations, the less it is assaulted and opposed by things grievous and perplexing in the way of the discharge of it, the more efficacious will be its operations on the minds of men, and the firmer will be the security unto others that thence ariseth. Now these advantages lie absolutely on the

part of them who practise, or are allowed so to do, according to their own light and persuasion in the worship of God, wherein they are at rest and full satisfaction of mind; and not on theirs who all their days are bound up to a perverse distorted posture of mind and soul, in judging one thing to be best and most pleasing unto God, and practising of the contrary. Such a one is the man that of all others rulers have need, I think, to be most jealous of. For what security can be had of him, who hath inured himself unto a continual contradiction between his faith and his practice? For my part, I should either expect no other measure from him in any other thing, nor ever judge that his profession and ways of actings are any sufficient indications of his mind (which takes away all security from mankind), or fear that his convictions of light and knowledge, as he apprehends, would at one time or other precipitate him into attempts of irregularity and violence for his own relief.

——— Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.

It will be said, perhaps, that we need not look farther for the disturbance of public peace, from them who practise outwardly any thing in the worship of God, but what is prescribed, established, and enjoined; seeing that every such practice is such a disturbance itself. I say this pretence is miserably ridiculous and contemptible, and contrary to the common experience of mankind. If this were so, the whole world for three hundred years lived in one continual disturbance and tumult upon the account of Christian religion, whose professors constantly practised and performed that in the worship of God, which was so far from being established or approved by public authority, that it was proscribed and condemned under penalties of all sorts, pecuniary, corporeal, and sanguinary or capital. But we see no such matter ensued, nor the least disquietment unto the world, but what was given unto it by the rage of bloody persecutors, that introduced the first convulsions into the Roman empire, which were never well quieted, but ended in its dissolution. The experience also of the present and next preceding ages, casts this frivolous exception out of consideration. And as such a practice, even against legal prohibitions, though it be by the transgression of a penal law, is yet in itself and just consequence remote enough

from any disturbance of government (unless we should suppose that every non-observance of a penal statute invalidates the government of a nation, which were to fix it upon such a foundation, as will not afford it the steadiness of a weathercock); so being allowed by way of exemption, it contains no invasion upon, or intrusion into, the rights of others; but being accompanied with the abridgment of the privileges of none, or the neglect of any duty required to the good of the commonwealth, it is as consistent with, and may be as conducing to, public good and tranquillity, as any order of religious things in the world, as shall be elsewhere demonstrated.

It remains, therefore, that the only answer to this consideration is, that men who plead for indulgence and liberty of conscience in the worship of God according to his word, and the light which he hath given them therein, have indeed no conscience at all, and so are not to be believed as to what they profess against sinister and evil practices. This flail I know no fence against, but this only, that they have as good and better grounds to suspect him to have no conscience at all, who upon unjust surmises shall so injuriously charge them, as finding him in a direct transgression of the principal rules that conscience is to be guided and directed by, than he hath to pronounce such a judgment concerning them and their sincerty in what they profess. And whether such mutual censures tend not to the utter overthrow of all peace, love, and security amongst mankind, is easy to determine. Certainly it is the worst game in the world for the public, to have men bandying suspicions one against another; and thereon managing mutual charges of all that they do surmise, or what else they please to give the countenance of surmise unto.

I acknowledge the notion insisted on, namely, 'that whilst men reserve to themselves the freedom and liberty of judging what they please, or what seems good unto them in matters of religion and the worship of God, they ought to esteem it their duty to practise in all things according to the prescription of their rulers, though every way contrary unto, and inconsistent with, their own judgments and persuasions, unless it be in things that countenance vice or disgrace the Deity' (whereof yet it may be, it will not be

thought meet that they themselves should judge for themselves and their own practice, seeing they may extend their conceptions about what doth so unto such minute instances as would frustrate the whole design), is exceedingly accommodated to the corrupt lusts and affections of men, and suited to make provision for their security in this world, by an exemption from the indispensable command of professing the truth communicated and known unto them; a sense of the obligation whereof, hath hitherto exposed innumerable persons in all ages to great difficulties, dangers, and sufferings, yea, to death, the height and sum of all. For whereas men have been persuaded that 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' the latter clause is in many cases hereby sufficiently superseded; and the troublesome duty seeming to be required in it, is removed out of the way. It will not, it may be, be so easy to prove that in the religion of the Mahometans there is any thing enjoined in practice, that will directly fall under the limitations assigned unto the compliance with the commands of superiors contended for. And therefore let a man but retain his own apprehensions concerning Jesus Christ and the gospel, it may be lawful for him, yea, be his duty, to observe the worship enjoined by the law of Mahomet, if his lot fall to live under the power of the Grand Seignior, or any sovereign prince of the same persuasion. But the case is clear in the religion of the Papists, which is under the protection of the greatest number of supreme magistrates in Europe. It will not be pretended, I suppose, by our author, that there is any thing in the confession of the church of Rome, or imposed by it on the practices of men, that directly gives countenance unto any immorality, especially as the sense of that term is by him stated; and it is no easy matter for ordinary men to prove and satisfy themselves, that there is aught in their modes of worship of such a tendency, as to cast disgrace upon the Deity; especially considering with how much learning and diligence the charge of any such miscarriage is endeavoured to be answered and removed; all which pleas ought to be satisfied, before a man can make sedately a determinate judgment of the contrary. Let then men's judgments be what they will in the matters of difference between

Protestants and Papists, it is on this hypothesis, the duty of all that live under the dominion of sovereign popish princes, outwardly to comply with and practise that religious worship that is commanded by them and enjoined. The case is the same also as to the religion of the Jews. Now as this casts a reflection of incredible folly and unexpiable guilt upon all Protestant martyrs, in casting away their own lives, and disobeying the commands of their lawful sovereigns, so it exposeth all the Protestants in the world, who are still in the same condition of subjection, to the severe censures of impiety and rebellion; and must needs exasperate their rulers to pursue them to destruction, under pretence of unwarrantable obstinacy in them. For if we wholly take off the protection of conscience in this matter, and its subjection to the authority of God alone, there is no plea left to excuse dissenting Protestants from the guilt of such crimes, as may make men justly cry out against them as the Jews did against St. Paul, 'Away with them, away with them, it is not meet that such fellows should live;' or, 'Protestantes ad leones,' according to the old cry of the pagans against the primitive Christians. But if this should prove to be a way of teaching and justifying the grossest hypocrisy and dissimulation that the nature of man is capable of, a means to cast off all regard unto the authority of God over the ways and lives of men, all the rhetoric in the world shall never persuade me that God hath so moulded and framed the order and state of human affairs, that it should be any way needful to the preservation of public peace and tranquillity. Openness, plainness of heart, sincerity in our actions and professions, generous honesty, and a universal respect in all things to the supreme rector of all, the great possessor of heaven and earth, with an endeavour to comply with his present revealed mind and future judgment, are far better foundations for, and ligaments of, public peace and quietness. To make this the foundation of our political superstructure, that 'divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet,' God hath immediate and sole power over the minds and inward thoughts of men; but the magistrate over the exercise of those thoughts in things especially belonging to the worship of God, and in the same instances, seems not to prognosticate a stable or durable building. The prophet

was not of that mind of old, who in the name of God blamed the people for willingly walking after the commandment of their ruler, in concerns of worship not warranted by divine appointment; nor was Daniel so, who, notwithstanding the severe prohibition made against his praying in his house, continued to do so three times a day.

But, besides all this, I do not see how this hypothesis is necessarily subservient to the principal design of the author, but it may be as well improved to quite distant, yea, contrary ends and purposes. His design plainly is to have one fabric of religion erected, one form of external worship enacted and prescribed, which all men should be compelled by penalties to the outward profession and observance of; these penalties he would have to be such as should not fail of their end, namely, of taking away all professed dissent from his religious establishment; which if it cannot be effected without the destruction and death of multitudes, they also are not to be forborne. Now how this ensues from the forementioned principle I know not. For a supreme magistrate, finding that the minds of very many of his subjects are in their judgments and persuasions engaged in a dissent unto the religion established by him, or somewhat in it, or some part of it, especially in things of practical worship, though he should be persuaded that he hath so far a power over their consciences as to command them to practise contrary to their judgment, yet knowing their minds and persuasions to be out of his reach and exempted from his jurisdiction, why may he not think it meet and conducing to public tranquillity and all the ends of his government, even the good of the whole community committed to his charge, rather to indulge them in the quiet and peaceable exercise of the worship of God according to their own light, than always to bind them up unto that unavoidable disquietment which will ensue upon the conflict in their minds between their judgments and their practices, if he should oblige them as is desired. Certainly, as in truth and reality, so according to this principle he hath power so to do. For to fancy him such a power over the religion and consciences of his subjects, as that he should be inevitably bound on all occurrences and in all conditions of affairs, to impose upon them the necessary observation of one form of worship, is that

which would quickly expose him to inextricable troubles. And instances of all sorts might be multiplied to shew the ridiculous folly of such a conception. Nay, it implies a perfect contradiction to what is disputed before. For if he be obliged to settle and impose such a form on all, it must be because there was a necessity of somewhat antecedent to his imposition, whence his obligation to impose it did arise. And on such a supposition it is in vain to inquire after his liberty or his power in these things, seeing by his duty he is absolutely determined, and whatever that be which doth so determine him and put an obligation upon him, it doth indispensably do the same on his subjects also; which as it is known utterly excludes the authority pleaded for.

This principle, therefore, indeed asserts his liberty to do what he judgeth meet in these matters, but contains nothing in it to oblige him to judge, that it may not be meet and most conducing unto all the ends of his government to indulge unto the consciences of men peaceable (especially if complying with him in all the fundamentals of the religion which himself professeth), the liberty of worshipping God according to what they apprehend of his own mind and will. And let an application of this principle be made to the present state of this nation, wherein there are so great multitudes of persons peaceable and not unuseful unto public good, who dissent from the present establishment of outward worship, and have it not in their power either to change their judgments or to practise contrary unto them; and as it is in the power of the supreme magistrate to indulge them in their own way, so it will prove to be his interest as he is the spring and centre of public peace and prosperity.

Neither doth it appear that in this discourse our author hath had any regard either to the real principles of the power of the magistrate as stated in this nation, or to his own, which are fictitious; but yet such as ought to be obligatory to himself; his principal assertion is, that 'the supreme magistrate hath power to bind the consciences of men in matters of religion,' that is, by laws and edicts to that purpose. Now the highest and most obligatory way of the supreme magistrate's speaking in England, is by acts of parliament; it is therefore supposed that what is so declared in or about matters of religion, should be obligatory to the

conscience of this author; but yet quite otherwise, p. 59. He sets himself to oppose and condemn a public law of the land, on no other ground than because it stood in his way, and seemed incompliant with his principles. For whereas the law of 2 and 3 Edw. VI. which appointed two weekly days for abstinence from flesh, had been amongst other reasons prefaced with this, 'That the king's subjects having now a more clear light of the gospel through the infinite mercy of God' (such canting language was then therein used), 'and thereby the king's majesty perceiving that one meat of itself was not more holy than another, &c. yet considering that due abstinence was a means to virtue, and to subdue men's bodies to their souls and spirits,' &c. And it being after found (it should seem by a farther degree of light) that those expressions, meeting with the inveterate opinions of some, newly brought out of popery, had given countenance to them to teach or declare that something of religion was placed therein; thereon, by the law made 5 Eliz. adding another weekly day to be kept with the former for the same purpose, the former clause was omitted, and mention only made therein of the civil and politic reasons inducing the legislators thereunto; and withal a penalty of inflicting punishment on those who should affirm and maintain that there was any concernment of conscience and religion in that matter. This provision hath so distasted our author, that forgetting it seems his own design, he reproaches it with the title of 'jejunium cecilianum;' and thinks it so far from obliging his conscience to acquiesce in the determination therein made, that he will not allow it to give law to his tongue or pen; but ('vexet censura columbas') it seems they are the fanatics only that are thus to be restrained.

Moreover, on occasion hereof, we might manifest how some other laws of this land do seem carefully to avoid that imposition on conscience, which against law and reason he pleadeth for; for instance, in that of 21 Jac. touching usury, and the restraint of it unto the sum therein established, it was provided, 'that no words in this act contained shall be construed or expounded to allow the practice of usury in point of religion and conscience.' And why did not the supreme magistrate in that law determine and bind the consciences of men, by a declaration of their duty in a

point of religion; seeing whether way soever the determination had been made, neither would immorality have been countenanced, nor the Deity disgraced? But plainly it is rather declared, that he hath not cognizance of such things with reference to the consciences of men to oblige them, or set them at liberty, but only power to determine what may be practised in order to public profit and peace. And therefore the law would neither bind, nor set at liberty the consciences of men in such cases, which is a work for the supreme lawgiver only.

Neither, as it hath been before observed, do the principles here asserted and contended for, either express or represent the supremacy of the kings of this nation in matters ecclesiastical, as it is stated and determined by themselves in parliament; but rather so, as to give great offence and scandal to the religion here professed and advantage to the adversaries thereof; for after there appeared some ambiguity in those words of the oath enacted 1 Eliz. of 'testifying the queen to be supreme governor as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as in temporal;' and many doubts and scruples ensued thereon, as though there were assigned to her a power over the consciences of her subjects in spiritual things, or that she had a power herself to order and administer spiritual things; in 5 Eliz. it is enacted by way of explanation, that the oaths aforesaid shall be expounded in such form as is set forth in the admonition annexed to the queen's injunctions, published in the first year of her reign, where disclaiming the power of the ministry of divine offices in the church, or the power of the priesthood here by our author affixed to the supreme magistrate, her power and authority is declared to be a sovereignty over all manner of persons born within this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, so that no foreign power hath, or ought to have, any superiority over them; and so is this supremacy stated in the articles, anno 1562, namely, an authority to rule all estates and degrees committed to the charge of the supreme magistrate by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and to restrain the stubborn or evil-doers. Of the things contended for by our author, the authority of the priesthood, and power over the consciences of men in matters of religion, there is not one word in our

laws, but rather they are both of them rejected and condemned.

I have yet laid the least part of that load upon this principle, which if it be farther pressed it must expect to be burdened withal, and that from the common suffrage of Christians in all ages. But yet that I may not transgress against the design of this short and hasty discourse, I shall proceed no farther in the pursuit of it; but take a little survey of what is here pleaded in its defence. Now this is undertaken and pursued in the first chapter, with the two next ensuing, where an end is put to this plea. For if I understand any thing of his words and expressions, our author in the beginning of his fourth chapter, cuts down all those gourds and wild vines that he had been planting in the three preceding; for he not only grants but disputes also for an obligation on the consciences of men antecedent and superior unto all human laws and their obligation; his words are as followeth, p. 115. 'It is not because subjects are in any thing free from the authority of the supreme power on earth, but because they are subject to a superior in heaven; and they are only then excused from the duty of obedience to their sovereign when they cannot give it without rebellion against God; so that it is not originally any right of their own that exempts them from a subjection to the sovereign power in all things: but it is purely God's right of governing his own creatures that magistrates then invade when they make edicts to violate or control his laws, and those who will take off from the consciences of men, all obligations antecedent to those of human laws, instead of making the power of princes supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable, they utterly enervate all their authority, and set their subjects at perfect liberty from all their commands.'

I know no men that pretend to exemption from the obligation of human laws, but only on this plea, that God by his law requires them to do otherwise; and if this be so, the authority of such laws as to the consciences of men, is superseded by the confession of this author. Allow therefore but the principles here expressed, namely, that men have a superior power over them in heaven, whose laws, and the revelation of whose will concerning them, is the supreme rule of their duty, whence an obligation is laid upon their

consciences of doing whatever is commanded, or not doing what is forbidden by him, which is superior unto, and actually supersedes all human commands and laws that interfere therewith, and I see neither use of, nor place for, that power of magistrates over the consciences of men, which is so earnestly contended for. And our author also in his ensuing discourse in that chapter, placeth all the security of government in the respect that the consciences of men have to the will and command of God; and which they profess to have; which in all these chapters he pleads to be a principle of all confusion. But it is the first chapter which alone we are now taking a view of. .

The only argument therein insisted on to make good the ascription unto the magistrate of the power over religion and the consciences of men before described, is 'the absolute and indispensable necessity of it, unto public tranquillity, which is the principal, and most important end of government.' In the pursuit of this argument, sometimes, yea often, such expressions are used concerning the magistrate's power, as in a tolerable construction declare it to be what no man denies nor will contend about. But it is necessary that they be interpreted according to the genius and tenor of the opinion contended for, and accordingly we will consider them. This alone, I say, is that which is here pleaded, or is given in as the subject of the ensuing discourse. But after all, I think that he who shall set himself seriously to find out how any thing here spoken, hath a direct and rational cogency towards the establishment of the conclusion before laid down, will find himself engaged in no easy an undertaking. We were told I confess at the entrance (so as that we may not complain of a surprisal) that we must expect to have invectives twisted with arguments, and some such thing seems here to be aimed at; but if a logical chemist come, and make a separation of the elements of this composition, he will find, if I mistake not, a heap of the drossy invective, and scarce the least appearance of any argument ore. Instead of sober rational arguing,

——— crimina rasis
Librat in antithetis;———

great aggravations of men's miscarriages in the pursuit of the dictates of their consciences, either real or feigned, edged

against, and fiercely reflected upon, those whom he makes his adversaries, and these the same for substance, repeated over and over in a great variety of well-placed words, take up the greatest part of his plea in this chapter, especially the beginning of it, wherein alone the controversy as by himself stated is concerned.

But if the power and authority over religion, and the consciences of men here ascribed unto supreme magistrates, be so indispensably necessary to the preservation of public tranquillity as is pretended, a man cannot but wonder how the world hath been in any age past kept in any tolerable peace and quietness; and how it is any where blessed with those ends of government at this day. For it will not be an easy task for our author or any one else to demonstrate that the power mentioned hath ever been either claimed or exercised by any supreme magistrate in Christendom, or that it is so at this day. The experience of past and present ages is therefore abundantly sufficient to defeat this pretence, which is sufficiently asserted without the least appearance of proof or argument to give it countenance or confirmation; or they must be very charitable to him, or ignorant in themselves, who will mistake invectives for arguments. The remembrance indeed of these severities I would willingly lay aside, especially because the very mention of them seems to express a higher sense of and regret concerning them than I am in the least subject unto, or something that looks like a design of retaliation; but as these things are far from my mind, so the continual returns that almost in every page I meet with, of high and contemptuous reproaches, will not allow that they be always passed by without any notice or remark.

It is indeed indispensably necessary that public peace and tranquillity be preserved; but that there is any thing in point of government necessary hereunto, but that God have all spiritual power over the consciences of men, and rulers political power over their actings wherein public peace and tranquillity are concerned, the world hath not hitherto esteemed, nor do I expect to find it proved by this author. If these things will not preserve the public peace, it will not be kept if one should rise from the dead to persuade men unto their duty. The power of God over the consciences

of men I suppose is acknowledged by all who own any such thing as conscience, or believe there is a God over all. That also in the exercise of this authority he requires of men all that obedience unto rulers that is any way needful or expedient unto the preservation of the ends of their rule, is a truth standing firm on the same foundation of universal consent, derived from the law of creation; and his positive commands to that purpose have an evidence of his will in this matter not liable to exception or control. This conscience unto God our author confesseth (as we have observed in his fourth chapter, to be the great preservation and security of government and governors, with respect unto the ends mentioned. And if so, what becomes of all the pretences of disorder and confusion that will ensue, unless this power over men's consciences be given to the magistrate and taken as it were out of the hands of God? Nor is it to be supposed that men will be more true to their consciences, supposing the reiglement of them in the hand of men, than when they are granted to be in the hand and power of God; for both at present are supposed to require the same things. Certainly where conscience respects authority, as it always doth, the more absolute and sovereign it apprehends the authority by which it is obliged, the greater and more firm will be the impressions of the obligation upon it. And in that capacity of pre-eminence it must look upon the authority of God compared with the authority of man. Here then lies the security of public peace and tranquillity, as it is backed by the authority of the magistrate, to see that all outward actions are suitable unto what conscience toward God doth in this matter openly and unquestionably require.

The pretence indeed is, that the placing of this authority over the consciences of men in the supreme ruler, doth obviate and take away all grounds and occasions of any such actings on the account of religion as may tend unto public disturbance. For suppose conscience, in things concerning religion and the worship of God, subject to God alone, and the magistrate require such things to be observed in the one or the other as God hath not required, at least in the judgments and consciences of them of whom the things prescribed are required, and to forbid the things that God requires to be observed and done; in this case it is said they

cannot or will not comply in active obedience with the commands of the magistrate. But what if it so fall out? Doth it thence follow that such persons must needs rebel and be seditious and disturb the public peace, of the society whereof they are members? Wherefore is it that they do not do or observe what is required of them by the magistrate in religion or the worship of God, or that they do what he forbids? Is it not because of the authority of God over their minds and consciences in these things? And why should it be supposed that men will answer the obligations laid by God on their consciences in one thing and not in another; in the things of his worship and not of obedience unto civil power, concerning which his commands are as express and evident as they can be pretended to be in the things which they avow their obligation unto?

Experience is pretended to the contrary. It is said again and again, that 'men under pretence of their consciences unto God in religion have raised wars and tumults, and brought all things into confusion in this kingdom and nation especially;' and what will words avail against the evidence of so open an experience to the contrary? But what if this also should prove a false and futilous pretence? Fierce and long wars have been in this nation of old, upon the various titles of persons pleading their right unto supreme government in the kingdom against one another; so also have there been about the civil rights and the privileges of the subjects in the confusions commonly called the Barons' Wars. The late troubles, disorders, and wars amongst us, must bear the weight of this whole charge. But if any one will take the pains to review the public writings, declarations, treatises whereby those tumults and wars were begun and carried on, he will easily discern that liberty of conscience in practice, or the exemption of it from the power of the magistrate as to the rule and conduct of it now ascribed unto him, in the latitude by sober persons defended or pleaded for, had neither place in, nor influence into the beginnings of those troubles. And when such confusions are begun, no man can give assurance or conjecture where they shall end.

Authority, laws, privileges, and I know not what things wherein private men of whom alone we treat, have no pre-

tence of interest, were pleaded in those affairs. He that would judge aright of these things, must set aside all other considerations, and give his instance of the tumults and seditions that have ensued on the account of men's keeping their consciences entire for God alone, without any just plea, or false pretence of authority, and the interest of men in the civil concerns of nations.

However, it cannot be pretended that liberty of conscience gave the least occasion unto any disorders in those days. For indeed there was none, but only that of opinion and judgment, which our author placeth out of the magistrate's cognizance and dispose; and supposeth it is a thing wherein the public peace neither is nor can be concerned. It is well if it prove so; but this liberty of judgment, constantly pressed with a practice contrary to its own determinations, will, I fear, prove the most dangerous posture of the minds of men, in reference to public tranquillity, that they can be well disposed into. However, we may take a little nearer view of the certain remedy provided for all these evils by our author, and satisfy ourselves in some inquiries about it. Shall then, according to this expedient, the supreme magistrate govern, rule, and oblige unto obedience the consciences of his subjects universally in all things in religion and the worship of God, so that appoint what he please, forbid what he please, subjects are bound in conscience to observe them and yield obedience accordingly? His answer, as far as I can gather his meaning, is, that he may and must do so in all things, taking care that what he commands shall neither countenance vice, nor disgrace the Deity, and then the subjects are obliged according to the inquiry. But there seems another limitation to be given to this power, p. 37. where he affirms, that the 'Lord Christ hath given severe injunctions to secure the obedience of men to all lawful superiors, except where they run directly cross to the interest of the gospel;' and elsewhere he seems to give the same privilege of exemption, where a religion is introduced that is idolatrous or superstitious. I would then a little farther inquire, who shall judge whether the things commanded in religion and the worship of God be idolatrous and superstitious? Whether they cross directly the interest of the gospel? Whether they countenance vice, and disgrace the

Deity or no? To say that the magistrate is to judge and determine hereof, is the highest foppery imaginable. For no magistrate, unless he be distracted, will enjoin such a religion to observance, as he judgeth himself to fall under the qualifications mentioned; and when he hath done, declare that so they do, and yet require obedience unto them. Besides, if this judgment be solely committed unto him, indeed in the issue there neither is, nor can be any question for a judgment to be passed upon in this matter. For his injunction doth quite render useless all disquisitions to that purpose. The judgment and determination hereof therefore is necessary to be left unto the subjects, from whom obedience is required. So it lies in the letter of the proposal, they must obey in all things but such; and therefore surely must judge what is such and what is not. Now who shall fix bounds to what they will judge to fall under one or other of these limitations? if they determine according to the best light they have, that the religious observances enjoined by the magistrate do directly cross the interest of the gospel, they are absolved by our author from any obligation in conscience to their observation. And so we are just as before; and this great engine for public tranquillity vanisheth into air and smoke.

Thus this author himself, in way of objection, supposeth a case of a magistrate enjoining, as was said, a religion superstitious and idolatrous; this he acknowledgeth to be an inconvenience; yet such as is far beneath the mischiefs that ensue upon the exemption of the consciences of men in religion from the power of the magistrate, which I confess I cannot but admire at, and can give reasons why I do so admire it; which also may be given in due season. But what then is to be done in this case? He answers, 'It is to be borne.' True; but how? Is it to be so borne as to practise and observe the things so enjoined though superstitious and idolatrous? Though his words are dubious, yet I suppose he he will not plainly say so; nor can he unless he will teach men to cast off all respect unto the authority of God, and open such a door to atheism, as his rhetorical prefatory invective will not be able to shut. The bearing then intended must be by patient suffering in a refusal to practise what is so commanded, and observing the contrary commands of

God. But why in this case ought they to suffer quietly for refusing a compliance with what is commanded, and for their observance of the contrary precepts of the gospel? Why, they must do so because of the command of God, obliging their consciences unto obedience to the magistrate in all things wherein the public peace is concerned, and so that is absolutely secured. Is it not evident to him that hath but half an eye that we are come about again where we were before? Let this be applied to all the concernments of religion and religious worship, and there will arise with respect unto them, the same security which in this case is deemed sufficient, and all that human affairs are capable of. For if in greater matters men may refuse to act according to the magistrate's command out of a sense of the authority of God obliging them to the contrary, and yet their civil peaceableness and obedience be absolutely secured from the respect of their consciences to the command of God requiring it; why should it not be admitted that they may and will have the same respect to that command, when they dissent from the magistrate's constitution in lesser things, on the same account of the authority of God requiring the contrary of them? Shall we suppose that they will cast off the authority of God requiring their obedience, on the account of their dissatisfaction in lesser things of the magistrate's appointment, when they will not do so for all the violences that may be offered unto them in things of greater and higher importance? The principle therefore asserted is as useless as it is false, and partakes sufficiently of both these properties to render it inconsiderable and contemptible. And he that can reconcile these things among themselves, or make them useful to the author's design, will achieve what I dare not aspire unto.

I know not any thing that remains in the first chapter deserving our farther consideration; what seems to be of real importance, or to have any aspect towards the cause in hand, may undergo some brief remarks, and so leave us at liberty to a farther progress. In general a supposition is laid down, and it is so vehemently asserted as is evident that it is accompanied with a desire that it should be taken for granted; namely, that if the consciences of men be not regulated in the choice and practice of religion by the au-

thority of the magistrate over them, they will undoubtedly run into principles and practices inconsistent with the safety of human society, and such as will lead them to seditions and tumults; and hence (if I understand him, a matter I am continually jealous about from the looseness of his expressions, though I am satisfied I constantly take his words in the sense which is received of them by the most intelligent persons) he educeth all his reasonings, and not from a mere dissent from the magistrate's injunctions, without the entertainment of such principles, or an engagement into such practices. I cannot, I say, find the arguments that arise from a mere supposition that men in some things relating to the worship of God, will or do practise otherwise than the magistrate commands, which are used to prove the inconsistency of such a posture of things with public tranquillity, which yet alone was the province our author ought to have managed. But there is another supposition added, that where conscience is in any thing left unto its own liberty to choose or refuse in the worship of God, there it will embrace, sure enough, such wicked, debauched, and seditious principles, as shall dispose men unto commotions, rebellions, and all such evils as will actually evert all rule, order, and policy amongst men. But now this supposition will not be granted him, in reference unto them who profess to take up all their profession of religion from the command of God, or the revelation of his will in the Scripture, wherein all such principles and practices as those mentioned are utterly condemned; and the whole profession of Christianity being left for three hundred years without the rule, guidance, and conduct of conscience now contended for, did not once give the least disturbance unto the civil governments of the world. Disturbances indeed there were, and dreadful revolutions of government in those days and places when and where the professors of it lived; but no concerns of religion being then involved in or with the civil rights and interests of men, as the professors of it had no engagements in them, so from those alterations and troubles no reflection could be made on their profession. And the like peace, the like innocency of religion, the like freedom from all possibility of such imputations as are now cast upon it, occasioned merely by its intertexture with the

affairs, rights, and laws of the nations, and the interests of its professors as such therein, will ensue, when it shall be separated from that relation wherein it stands to this world, and left at the pure naked tendency of the souls of men to another, and not before.

But what says our author? 'If for the present the minds of men happen to be tainted with such furious and boisterous conceptions of religion as incline them to stubbornness and sedition, and make them unmanageable to the laws of government, shall not a prince be allowed to give check to such unruly and dangerous persuasions?' I answer; That such principles which being professed and avowed, are in their own nature and just consequence destructive to public peace and human society, are all of them directly opposite to the light of human nature, that common reason and consent of mankind wherein and whereon all government is founded, with the prime fundamental laws and dictates of the Scripture, and so may and ought to be restrained in the practices of the persons that profess them; and with reference unto them the magistrate 'beareth not the sword in vain.' For human society being inseparably consequent unto, and an effect of, the law of our nature, or concreated principles of it, which hath subdued the whole race of mankind in all times and places unto its observance; opinions, persuasions, principles opposite unto it, or destructive of it, manifesting themselves by any sufficient evidence, or in overt acts, ought to be no more allowed than such as profess an enmity to the being and providence of God himself. For men's inclinations indeed, as in themselves considered, there is no competent judge of them amongst the sons of men; but as to all outward actions that are of the tendency described, they are under public inspection to be dealt withal according to their demerit.

I shall only add that the mormo here made use of, is not now first composed or erected; it hath for the substance of it been flourished by the Papists ever since the beginning of the reformation. Neither did they use to please themselves more in, or to dance more merrily about, any thing than this calf; let private men have their consciences exempted from a necessary obedience to the prescriptions of the church, and they will quickly run into all pernicious

fancies and persuasions. It is known how this scare-crow hath been cast to the ground, and this calf stamped to powder by divines of the church of England. It is no pleasant thing, I confess, to see this plea revived now with respect to the magistrate's authority, and not the pope's; for I fear that when it shall be manifested, and that by the consent of all parties, that there is no pleadable argument to bottom this pretension for the power of the magistrate upon, some rather than forego it, will not be unwilling to recur to the fountain from whence it first sprang, and admit the pope's plea as meet to be revived in this case. And indeed if we must come at length for the security of public peace, to deprive all private persons of the liberty of judging what is right and wrong in religion in reference to their own practice, or what is their duty towards God about his worship and what is not, there are innumerable advantages attending the design of devolving the absolute determination of these things upon the pope, above that of committing it to each supreme magistrate in his own dominions. For besides the plea of at least better security in his determinations than in that of any magistrates, if not his infallibility which he hath so long talked of, and so sturdily defended as to get it a greater reputation in the world, the delivering up of the faith and consciences of all men unto him, will produce a seeming agreement, at least of incomparably a larger extent, than the remitting of all things of this nature to the pleasure of every supreme magistrate, which may probably establish as many different religions in the world, as there are different nations, kingdoms, or commonwealths.

That which alone remains seeming to give countenance to the assertions before laid down, is our author's assignation of the priesthood by natural right unto the supreme magistrate, which in no alteration of religion he can be divested of, but by virtue of some positive law of God, as it was for a season in the Mosaical institution and government. But these things seem to be of no force. For it never belonged to the priesthood, to govern or to rule the consciences of men with an absolute uncontrollable power; but only in their name, and for them, to administer the holy things, which by common consent were admitted, and received amongst them. Besides, our author by his discourse

seems not to be much acquainted with the rise of the office of the priesthood amongst men, as shall be demonstrated, if farther occasion be given thereunto. However by the way we may observe what is his judgment in this matter. The magistrate we are told hath not his ecclesiastical authority from Christ; and yet this is such as that the power of the priesthood is included therein; the exercise whereof 'as he is pleased to transfer to others, so he may, if he please, reserve it to himself,' p. 32. whence it follows, not only that it cannot be given by Christ unto any other, for it is part of the magistrate's power, which he hath not limited, nor confined by any subsequent law, nor can there be a co-ordinate subject of the same power of several kinds; so that all the interest or right, any man or men have in or unto the exercise of it, is but transferred to them by the magistrate; and therefore they act therein in his name, and by his authority only; and hence the bishops, as such, are said to be 'ministers of state,' p. 49. Neither can it be pretended that this was indeed in the power of the magistrate before the coming of Christ, but not since. For he hath as we are told, all that he ever had, unless there be a restraint put upon him by some express prohibition of our Saviour, p. 41. which will hardly be found in this matter. I cannot therefore see how in the exercise of the Christian priesthood there is (on these principles) any the least respect unto Jesus Christ, or his authority; for men have only the exercise of it transferred to them by the magistrate, by virtue of a power inherent in him antecedent unto any concessions of Christ; and therefore in his name and authority they must act in all the sacred offices of their functions. It is well if men be so far awake as to consider the tendency of these things.

At length Scripture proofs for the confirmation of these opinions are produced, pp. 35, 36. And the first pleaded is that promise, that 'kings shall be nursing fathers unto the church.' It is true this is promised, and God accomplish it more and more; but yet we do not desire such nurses, as beget the children they nurse; the proposing, prescribing, commanding, binding religion on the consciences of men, is rather the begetting of it than its nursing. To take care of the church and religion, that it receive no detriment, by

all the ways and means appointed by God, and useful thereunto, is the duty of the magistrates; but it is so also antecedently to their actings unto this purpose, to discern aright which is the church whereunto this promise is made, without which they cannot duly discharge their trust, nor fulfil the promise itself; the very words, by the rules of the metaphor, do imply, that the church, and its religion, and the worship of God observed therein, is constituted, fixed, and regulated by God himself, antecedently unto the magistrate's duty and power about it. They are to nurse that which is committed to them, and not what themselves have framed or begotten. And we contend for no more but a rule concerning religion, and the worship of God antecedent unto the magistrate's interposing about it, whereby both his actings in his place, and those of subjects in theirs, are to be regulated. Mistakes herein have engaged many sovereign princes in pursuit of their trust as nursing fathers to the church, to lay out their strength and power for the utter ruin of it; as may be evidenced in instances too many of those, who in a subserviency to, and by the direction of, the papal interest, have endeavoured to extirpate true religion out of the world. Such a nursing mother we had sometimes in England, who in pursuit of her care burned so many bishops and other holy men to ashes.

He asks farther, 'What doth the Scripture mean when it styles our Saviour the King of kings, and maketh princes his vicegerents here on earth?' I confess, according to this gentleman's principles, I know not what it means in so doing: kings, he tells us, have not their authority in and over religion and the consciences of men from him, and therefore in the exercise of it cannot be his vicegerents; for none is the vicegerent of another in the exercise of any power and authority, if he have not received that power and authority from him. Otherwise the words have a proper sense, but nothing to our author's purpose. It is his power over them, and not theirs over the consciences of their subjects, that is intended in the words. Of no more use in this controversy is the direction of the apostle, that we 'should pray for kings, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life;' for no more is intended therein, but that, under their peaceable and righteous administration of

human affairs, we may live in that godliness and honesty which is required of us. Wherefore then are these weak attempts made to confirm and prove what is not? Those, or the most of them, whom our author in this discourse treats with so much severity, do plead that it is the duty of all supreme magistrates to find out, receive, embrace, promote the truths of the gospel, with the worship of God appointed therein, confirming, protecting, and defending them, and those that embrace them, by their power and authority. And in the discharge of this duty, they are to use the liberty of their own judgments, informed by the ways that God hath appointed, independently on the dictates and determinations of any other persons whatever. They affirm also, that to this end they are intrusted with supreme power over all persons in their respective dominions, who on no pretence can be exempted from the exercise of that power, as occasion in their judgments shall require it to be exercised; as also that all causes, wherein the profession of religion in their dominions is concerned, which are determinable in 'foro civili' by coercive umpirage or authority, are subject unto their cognizance and power. The sovereign power over the consciences of men to institute, appoint, and prescribe religion and the worship of God, they affirm to belong unto him alone, who is the 'author and finisher of our faith, who is the head over all things to the church.' The administration of things merely spiritual in the worship of God is, they judge, derived immediately from him to the ministers and administrators of the gospel, possessed of their offices by his command, and according to his institution; as to the external practice of religion, and religious worship as such, it is, they say, in the power of the magistrate to regulate all the outward civil concernments of it, with reference unto the preservation of public peace and tranquillity, and the prosperity of his subjects; and herein also they judge that such respect is to be had to the consciences of men, as the Scripture, the nature of the thing itself, and the right of the Lord Christ to introduce his spiritual kingdom into all nations do require.

That which seems to have imposed on the mind of this author is, that if the magistrate may make laws for the regulating of the outward profession of religion, so as public

peace and tranquillity may be kept, added to what is his duty to do in the behalf of the truth; then he must have the power over religion, and the consciences of men by him ascribed unto him; but there is no privity of interest between these things; the laws which he makes to this purpose, are to be regulated by the word of God and the good of the community, over which in the name of God he doth preside; and whence he will take his warranty to forbid men the exercise of their consciences in the duties of spiritual worship, whilst the principles they profess are suited to the light of nature, and the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, with the peace of mankind, and their practices absolutely consistent with public welfare, I am yet to seek; and so, as far as I can yet perceive, is the author of the discourse under consideration. It will not arise from a parity of reason from the power that he hath to restrain cursed swearing and blasphemies, by penal coercions. For these things are no less against the light of nature, and no less condemned by the common suffrage of mankind (and the persons that contract the guilt of them may be no less effectually brought to judge and condemn themselves) than are the greatest outrages that may be committed in and against human society. That the gospel will give no countenance hereunto, he seems to acknowledge, in his assignation of several reasons why the use of the power, and exercise of it in the way of compulsion by penalties, pleaded for by him, is not mentioned therein; that 'Christ and his apostles behaved themselves as subjects; that he neither took nor exercised any sovereign power; that he gave his laws to private men as such, and not to the magistrate, that the power that then was, was in bad hands,' are pleaded as excuses for the silence of the gospel in this matter. But lest this should prove farther prejudicial to his present occasion, he adds, p. 42. 'the only reason why the Lord Christ bound not the precepts of the gospel upon men's consciences by any secular compulsories, was not because compulsion was an improper way to put his laws in execution; for then he had never established them with more enforcing sanctions, but only because himself was not vested with any secular power, and so could not use those methods of government which are proper to its jurisdiction.' This in plain English

is, that if Christ had had power, he would have ordered the gospel to have been propagated as Mahomet hath done his Alcoran; an assertion untrue and impious, contrary to the whole spirit and genius of the gospel, and of the author of it, and the commands and precepts of it. And it is fondly supposed, that the Lord Christ suited all the management of the affairs of the gospel unto that state and condition in this world, wherein he 'emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, making himself of no reputation, that he might be obedient unto death, the death of the cross.' He lays the foundation of the promulgation and propagation of it in the world, in the grant of all power unto him in heaven and earth. 'All power,' saith he to his apostles, 'is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and baptize all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;' Matt. xxviii. 18—20. He is considered in the dispensation of the gospel, as he who 'is head over all things to the church, the Lord of lords, and King of kings,' whom our author acknowledgeth to be his vicegerents. On this account the gospel, with all the worship instituted therein and required thereby, is accompanied with a right to enter into any of the kingdoms of the earth, and spiritually to make the inhabitants of them subject to Jesus Christ; and so to translate them 'out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God.' And this right is antecedent and paramount to the right of all earthly kings and princes whatever, who have no power or authority to exclude the gospel out of their dominions; and what they exercise of that kind is done at their peril.

The penalties that he hath annexed to the final rejection of the gospel, and disobedience thereunto, are pleaded by our author, to justify the magistrate's power of binding men to the observation of his commands in religion on temporal penalties to be by him inflicted on them; unto that is the discourse of this chapter arrived which was designed unto another end. I see neither the order, method, nor projection of this procedure; nor know,

Amphora cum cepit institui, cur urceus exit.

However, the pretence itself is weak and impertinent. Man was originally made under a law and constitution of eternal bliss or woe. This state, with regard to his necessary de-

pendence on God, and respect to his utmost end, was absolutely unavoidable unto him. All possibility of attaining eternal happiness by himself he lost by sin, and became inevitably obnoxious to eternal misery, and the wrath to come. In this condition the Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme Lord of the souls and consciences of men, interposeth his law of relief, redemption, and salvation, the great means of man's recovery, together with the profession of the way and law hereof. He lets them know, that those by whom it is refused shall perish under that wrath of God, which before they were obnoxious unto, with a new aggravation of their sin and condemnation, from the contempt of the relief provided for them, and tendered to them. This he applies to the souls and consciences of men, and to all the inward secret actings of them, in the first place, such as are exempted not only from the judicature of men, but from the cognizance of angels. This he doth by spiritual means in a spiritual manner, with regard to the subjection of the souls of men unto God, and with reference unto their bringing to him, and enjoyment of him, or their being eternally rejected by him. Hence to collect and conclude that earthly princes, who (whatever is pretended) are not the sovereign lords of the souls and consciences of men, nor do any of them, that I know of, plead themselves so to be; who cannot interpose any thing by their absolute authority, that should have a necessary respect unto men's eternal condition; who have no knowledge of, no acquaintance with, nor can judge of the principal things whereon it doth depend, from whose temporal jurisdiction and punishment, the things of the gospel, and the worship of God as purely such, are (by the nature of them, being spiritual and not of this world, though exercised in it, having their respect only unto eternity, and by their being taken into the sole disposal of the sovereign Lord of consciences, who hath accompanied his commands concerning them with his own promises and threatenings), plainly exempted; should have power over the consciences of men, so to lay their commands upon them in these spiritual things, as to back them with temporal, corporeal restraints and punishments, is a way of arguing that will not be confined unto any of those rules of reasoning, which hitherto we have been instructed in. When the magistrate hath 'an arm like God,' and 'can thunder with a voice like

him ;' when he judgeth 'not after the sight of his eyes, nor reproveth after the hearing of his ears; when he can smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips;' when he is constituted a judge of the faith, repentance, and obedience of men, and of their efficacy in their tendency unto the pleasing of God here, and the enjoyment of him hereafter; when spiritual things in order to their eternal issues and effects are made subject unto him; in brief, when he is Christ, let him act as Christ, or rather most unlike him, and guide the consciences of men by rods, axes, and halters (whereunto alone his power can reach), who in the mean time have an express command from the Lord Christ himself, not to have their consciences influenced in the least by the consideration of these things.

Of the like complexion is the ensuing discourse, wherein our author, p. 43. having spoken contemptuously of the spiritual institutions of the gospel, as altogether 'insufficient for the accomplishment of the ends whereunto they are designed,' forgetting that they respect only the consciences of men, and are his institutions who is the Lord of their consciences, and who will give them power and efficacy to attain their ends, when administered in his name, and according to his mind, and that because they are his; would prove the necessity of temporal coercions, and penalties in things spiritual, from the extraordinary effects of excommunication in the primitive times, in the 'vexation and punishment of persons excommunicate by the devil.' This work the devil now ceasing to attend unto, he would have the magistrate to take upon him to supply his place and office, by punishments of his own appointment and infliction; and so at last, to be sure of giving him full measure, he hath ascribed two extremes unto him about religion, namely, to act the part of God and the devil. But as this inference is built upon a very uncertain conjecture, namely, that upon the giving up of persons to Satan in excommunication, there did any visible, or corporeal vexation of them by his power ensue, or any other effects but what may yet be justly expected from an influence of his terror on the minds of men, who are duly and regularly cast out of the visible kingdom of Christ by that censure; and whereas, if there be any truth in it, it was confined unto the days of the apostles, and is to be

reckoned amongst the miraculous operations granted to them for the first confirmation of the gospel; and the continuance of it, all the time the church wanted the assistance of the civil magistrate, is most unduly pretended without any colour of proof or instance, beyond such as may be evidenced to continue at this day; supposing it to be true, the inference made from it, as to its consequence on this concession, is exceeding weak and feeble. For the argument here amounteth to no more but this; God was pleased, in the days of the apostles, to confirm their spiritual censures against stubborn sinners, apostates, blasphemers, and such like heinous offenders, with extraordinary spiritual punishments (so in their own nature, or in the manner or way of their infliction), therefore the civil magistrate hath power to appoint things to be observed in the worship of God, and forbid other things, which the light and consciences of men, directed by the word of God, require the observation of, upon ordinary, standing, corporeal penalties, to be inflicted on the outward man; 'quod erat demonstrandum.'

To wind up this debate, I shall commit the umpirage of it to the church of England, and receive her determination in the words of one who may be supposed to know her sense and judgment, as well as any one who lived in his days or since. And this is Doctor Bilson bishop of Winchester, a learned man, skilled in the laws of the land, and a great adversary unto all that dissented from church constitutions. This man therefore treating, by way of dialogue, in answer to the Jesuits' Apology and Defence, in the third part, p. 293. thus introduceth Theophilus a Protestant divine, arguing with Philander a jesuit about these matters. '*Theoph.* As for the supreme head of the church; it is certain that title was first transferred from the pope to King Henry the Eighth, by the bishops of your side, not of ours. And though the pastors in King Edward's time might not well dislike, much less dissuade the style of the crown, by reason the king was under years, and so remained until he died; yet as soon as it pleased God to place her majesty in her father's throne, the nobles and preachers perceiving the words, 'head of the church' (which is Christ's proper and peculiar honour), to be offensive unto many that had vehemently repelled the same in the pope, besought her highness the meaning of

that word which her father had used, might be expressed in some plainer apter terms; and so was the prince called supreme governor of the realm; that is, ruler and bearer of the sword, with lawful authority to command and punish, answerable to the word of God, in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as well as in temporal. And no foreign prince or prelate, to have any jurisdiction, superiority, preeminence, or authority to establish, prohibit, correct, and chastise with public laws, or temporal pains, any crimes or causes ecclesiastical or spiritual within her realm. *Philand.* Calvin saith this is sacrilege and blasphemy. Look you therefore with what consciences you take that oath, which your own master so mightily detesteth. *Theoph.* Nay, look you with what faces you alledge Calvin, who maketh that style to be sacrilegious and blasphemous, as well in the pope as in the prince; reason therefore you receive or refuse his judgment in both. If it derogate from Christ in the prince, so it doth in the pope. Yet we grant the sense of the word supreme, as Calvin perceived it by Stephen Gardiner's answer and behaviour, is very blasphemous and injurious to Christ and his word, whether it be prince or pope that so shall use it.' What this sense is, he declares in the words of Calvin, which are as followeth, in his translation of them: 'That juggler, which after was chancellor, I mean the bishop of Winchester, when he was at Rentzburge, neither would stand to reason the matter, nor greatly cared for any testimonies of the Scripture, but said it was at the king's discretion to abrogate that which was in use, and appoint new. He said the king might forbid priests' marriage, the king might bar the people from the cup in the Lord's supper; the king might determine this or that in his kingdom: and why? forsooth, the king had supreme power. This sacrilege hath taken hold on us, whilst princes think they cannot reign except they abolish all the authority of the church, and be themselves supreme judges as well in doctrine as in all spiritual regiment.' To which he subjoins; 'This was the sense which Calvin affirmed to be sacrilegious and blasphemous; for princes to profess themselves to be supreme judges of doctrine and discipline; and indeed it is the blasphemy which all godly hearts reject and abomine, in the bishop of Rome. Neither did King Henry take any such

thing on him for aught that we can learn; but this was Gardiner's stratagem, to convey the reproach and shame of the six articles from himself and his fellows that were the authors of them, and to cast it on the king's supreme power. Had Calvin been told, that supreme was first received to declare the prince to be superior to the prelates (which exempted themselves from the king's authority by their church liberties and immunities), as well as to the laymen of this realm, and not to be subject to the pope, the word would never have offended him.' Thus far he; and if these controversies be any farther disputed, it is probable the next defence of what is here pleaded, will be in the express words of the principal prelates of this realm since the reformation, until their authority be peremptorily rejected.

Upon my first design to take a brief survey of this discourse, I had not the least intention to undertake the examination of any particular assertions or reasonings that might fall under controversy, but merely to examine the general principles whereon it doth proceed. But passing through these things 'currente calamo,' I find myself engaged beyond my thoughts and resolutions; I shall therefore here put an end to the consideration of this chapter, although I see sundry things as yet remaining in it that might immediately be discussed with ease and advantage, as shall be manifest, if we are called again to a review of them. I have neither desire nor design 'serram reciprocare,' or to engage in any controversial discourses with this author. And I presume himself will not take it amiss, that I do at present examine those principles whose novelty justifies a disquisition into them; and whose tendency, as applied by him, is pernicious and destructive to so many quiet and peaceable persons who dissent from him. And yet I will not deny but that I have that valuation and esteem for that sparkling of wit, eloquence, and sundry other abilities of mind, which appear in his writing, that if he would lay aside the manner of his treating those from whom he dissents with revilings, contemptuous reproaches, personal reflections, sarcasms, and satirical expressions, and would candidly and perspicuously state any matter in difference; I should think that what he hath to offer may deserve the consideration of them who have leisure for such a purpose. If he be otherwise

minded, and resolved to proceed in the way, and after the manner here engaged in, as I shall in the close of this discourse absolutely give him my 'salve æternumque vale,' so I hope he will never meet with any one who shall be willing to deal with him at his own weapons.

A SURVEY OF THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The summary of this chapter must needs give the reader a great expectation, and the chapter itself no less of satisfaction, if what is in the one briefly proposed, be in the other as firmly established. For amongst other things, a scheme of religion is promised, reducing all its branches either to moral virtues or instruments of morality, which being spoken of Christian religion, is, as far as I know, an undertaking new and peculiar unto this author, in whose management all that reads him must needs weigh and consider, how dexterously he hath acquitted himself. For as all men grant that morality hath a great place in religion, so that all religion is nothing but morality, many are now to learn. The villany of those men's religion that are wont to distinguish between grace and virtue (that is moral virtue), is nextly traduced and inveighed against. I had rather I confess that he had affixed the term of villany to the men themselves, whom he intended to reflect on, than to their religion; because as yet it seems to me that it will fall on Christianity, and no other real or pretended religion that is, or ever was in the world. For if the professors of it have in all ages according to its avowed principles, never before contradicted, made a distinction between moral virtues (since these terms were known in the church) and evangelical graces, if they do so at this day, what religion else can be here branded with this infamous and horrible reproach, I know not. A farther inquiry into the chapter itself may possibly give us farther satisfaction, wherein we shall deal as impartially as we are able, with a diligent watchfulness against all prejudicate affections, that we may discover what there is of sense and truth in the discourse, being ready to receive whatever shall be manifested to have an interest in them. The civil magistrate we are also here in-

formed, amongst many other things that he may do, 'may command any thing in the worship of God that doth not tend to debauch men's practices, or to disgrace the Deity.' And that 'all subordinate duties both of morality and religious worship' (such as elsewhere we are told the sacraments are) 'are equally subject to the determination of human authority.' These things, and sundry others represented in this summary, being new, yea some of them, as far as I know, unheard of amongst Christians until within a few years last past, any reader may justify himself in the expectation of full and demonstrative arguments to be produced in their proof and confirmation. What the issue will be, some discovery may be made by the ensuing inquiry, as was said, into the body of the chapter itself.

The design of this chapter in general is, to confirm the power of the magistrate over religion, and the consciences of men ascribed unto him in the former, and to add unto it some enlargements not therein insisted on. The argument used to this purpose, is taken from the power of the magistrate over the consciences of men in matters of morality, or with respect unto moral virtue; whence it is supposed the conclusion is so evident unto his power over their consciences in matters of religious worship, that it strikes our author with wonder and amazement that it should not be received and acknowledged. Wherefore, to further the conviction of all men in this matter, he proceeds to discourse of moral virtue, of grace, and of religious worship, with his wonted reflections upon, and reproaches of the nonconformists, for their ignorance about, and villanous misrepresentation of these things, which seem more to be aimed at than the argument itself.

I must here wish again that our author had more perspicuously stated the things which he proposeth to debate for the subject of his disputation. But I find an excess of art is as troublesome sometimes as the greatest defect therein. From thence I presume it is, that things are so handled in this discourse, that an ordinary man can seldom discern satisfactorily what it is that directly and determinately he doth intend, beyond reviling of nonconformists. For in this proposition, which is the best and most intelligible that I can reduce the present discourse unto, 'the su-

preme civil magistrate hath power over the consciences of men in morality, or with respect unto moral virtue;' excepting only the subject of it, there is not one term in it that may not have various significations; and those such as have countenance given unto them in the ensuing disputation itself. But, 'contenti sumus hoc Catone,' and make the best we can of what lies before us.

I do suppose that in the medium made use of in this argument there is, or I am sure there may be, a controversy of much more importance than that principally under consideration. It therefore shall be stated and cleared in the first place, and then the concernment of the argument itself in what is discoursed thereupon shall be manifested. It is about moral virtue and grace, their coincidence, or distinction, that we are in the first place to inquire. For without a due stating of the conception of these things, nothing of this argument, nor what belongs unto it, can be rightly understood. We shall therefore be necessitated to premise a brief explanation of these terms themselves, to remove as far as may be all ambiguity from our discourse.

First, then, The very name of virtue, in the sense wherein it is commonly used and received, comes from the schools of philosophy, and not from the Scripture. In the Old Testament we have 'uprightness, integrity, righteousness, doing good and eschewing evil, fearing, trusting, obeying, believing in God, holiness,' and the like; but the name of virtue doth not occur therein. It is true we have translated אשת חיל 'a virtuous woman;' and once or twice the same word 'virtuously,' Ruth iii. 11. Prov. xii. 4. xxxi. 10. 39. but that word signifies as so used, 'strenuous, industrious, diligent,' and hath no such signification as that we now express by 'virtue.' Nor is i tany where rendered ἀρετὴ by the LXX. although it may have some respect unto it, as ἀρετὴ may be derived from ἄρης, and peculiarly denote the exercise of industrious strength, such as men use in battle. For חיל is 'vis, robur, potentia,' or 'exercitus' also. But in the common acceptation of it, and as it is used by philosophers, there is no word in the Hebrew or Syriac properly to express it. The rabbins do it by מדה which signifies properly 'a measure.' For studying the philosophy of Aristotle, and translating his Ethics into Hebrew, which was

done by Rabbi Meir, and finding his virtue placed in mediocrity, they applied מדה to express it. So they call Aristotle's Ethics ספר המדות 'the Book of Measures,' that is of virtues. And מדות טבות are 'boni mores.' Such a stranger is this very word unto the Old Testament. In the New Testament ἀρετὴ occurs four times; but it should not seem any where to be taken in the sense now generally admitted, in some of the places it rather denotes the excellency and praises that do attend virtue, than virtue itself. So we render ἀρετὰς 'praises,' 1 Pet. ii. 8. as the Syriac doth also תשבוחתה, 'praises;' and the same translation, Phil. iv. 9. renders εἴ τις ἀρετὴ, 'if there be any virtue,' by עבדא דשובחא, 'works glorious,' or 'praiseworthy;' 2 Pet. i. 9. It is a peculiar gracious disposition, operation of mind, distinguished from faith, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, &c. and so cannot have the common sense of the word there put upon it.

The word 'moral' is yet far more exotic to the church and Scripture. We are beholden for it, if there be any advantage in its use, merely to the schools of the philosophers, especially of Aristotle. His doctrine περὶ ἠθῶν, commonly called his Ἠθικὰ or 'Moralia,' his Morals, hath begotten this name for our use. The whole is expressed in Isocrates to Demonicus by ἡ τῶν πρόπων ἀρετὴ, 'the virtue of manners.' If then the signification of the words be respected as usually taken, it is virtue in men's manners that is intended. The schoolmen brought this expression with all its concerns, as they did the rest of Aristotle's philosophy, into the church and divinity. And I cannot but think it had been well if they had never done it; as all will grant they might have omitted some other things without the least disadvantage to learning or religion. However, this expression of 'moral virtue' having absolutely possessed itself of the fancies and discourses of all, and it may be of the understanding of some, though with very little satisfaction when all things are considered, I shall not endeavour to dispossess it, or eliminate it from the confines of Christian theology. Only I am sure had we been left unto the Scripture expressions, of 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, of the fear of God, of holiness, righteousness, living unto God, walking with God, and before him,' we might have

been free from many vain wordy perplexities; and the whole wrangle of this chapter in particular, had been utterly prevented. For let but the Scripture express what it is to be religious, and there will be no contesting about the difference or no difference between grace and moral virtue. It is said, that 'some judge those who have moral virtue to want grace, not to be gracious.' But say, that men 'are born of God, and do not commit sin,' that they 'walk before God and are upright,' that they 'cleave unto God with full purpose of heart,' that they 'are sanctified in Christ Jesus' and the like, and no man will say that they have not grace, or are not gracious, if they receive your testimony. But having, as was said, made its entrance amongst us, we must deal with it as well as we can, and satisfy ourselves about its common acceptation and use.

Generally, moral virtues are esteemed to be the duties of the second table. For although those who handle these matters more accurately, do not so straiten or confine them, yet it is certain that in vulgar and common acceptation (which strikes no small stroke, in the regulating of the conceptions of the wisest men, about the signification of words), nothing else is intended by moral virtues or duties of morality, but the observation of the precepts of the second table. Nor is any thing else designed by those divines, who in their writings so frequently declare, that it is not morality alone that will render men acceptable to God. Others do extend these things farther, and fix the denomination of moral, firstly upon the law or rule of all those habits of the mind and its operations, which afterward thence they call moral. Now this moral law is nothing but the law of nature, or the law of our creation; which the apostle affirms to lie equally obligatory on all men, even all the Gentiles themselves, Rom. ii. 14, 15. and whereof the Decalogue is summarily expressive. This moral law is therefore the law written in the hearts of all men by nature, which is resolved partly into the nature of God himself, which cannot but require most of the things of it from rational creatures; partly into that state and condition of the nature of things and their mutual relations, wherein God was pleased to create and set them. These things might be easily instanced and exemplified, but that we must not too much divert from our pre-

sent occasion. And herein lies the largest sense and acceptation of the law moral, and consequently of moral virtues, which have their form and being from their relation and conformity thereunto. Let it be then, that moral virtues consist in the universal observance of the requisites and precepts of the law of our creation and dependence on God thereby. And this description, as we shall see for the substance of it, is allowed by our author.

Now these virtues, or this conformity of our minds and actions unto the law of our creation, may be, in the light and reason of Christian religion, considered two ways. First, as with respect unto the substance or essence of the duties themselves, they may be performed by men in their own strength, under the conduct of their own reason, without any special assistance from the Spirit, or sanctifying grace of Christ. In this sense, they still bear the name of virtues, and for the substance of them deserve so to do. Good they are in themselves, useful to mankind, and seldom in the providence of God go without their reward in this world. I grant, I say, that they may be obtained and acted without special assistance of grace evangelical; though the wiser heathens acknowledged something divine in the communication of them to men. Papinius speaks to that purpose,

> Diva Jovis solio juxta comes; unde per orbem
> Rara dari, terrisque solet contingere virtus.
> Seu Pater Omnipotens tribuit, sive ipsa capaces
> Elegit penetrare viros.———

But old Homer put it absolutely in the will of his God.

> Ζεὺς δ' ἀρετὴν ἄνδρεσσιν ὀφέλλοι τε μινύθει τε
> Ὅππως κεν ἐθελήσι.

Thus we grant moral virtue to have been in the heathen of old. For this is that alone whereby they were distinguished amongst themselves. And he that would exclude them all from any interest in moral virtue, takes away all difference between Cato and Nero, Aristides and Tiberius, Titus and Domitian; and overthrows all natural difference between good and evil; which besides other abominations that it would plentifully spawn in the world, would inevitably destroy all human society. But now these moral virtues thus performed, whatever our author thinks, are distinct from grace, may be without it, and in their present description, which is not imaginary, but real, are supposed so to be.

And if he pleases he may exercise himself in the longsome disputes of Bellarmine, Gregory de Valentia, and others to this purpose innumerable; not to mention reformed divines, lest they should be scornfully rejected as systematical. And this is enough I am sure to free their religion from villany, who make a distinction between moral virtue and grace. And if our author is otherwise minded, and doth believe that there is grace evangelical wherever there is moral virtue, or that moral virtues may be so obtained and exercised without the special assistance of grace, as to become a part of our religion, and accepted with God, and will maintain his opinion in writing, I will promise him if I live to return him an answer, on one only condition, which is, that he will first answer what Augustine hath written against the Pelagians on this subject.

Again, these moral virtues, this observance of the precepts of the law of our creation, in a consonancy whereunto originally the image of God in us did consist, may now under the gospel be considered, as men are principled, assisted, and enabled to and in their performance by the grace of God, and as they are directed unto the especial end of living unto him in and by Jesus Christ. What is particularly required hereunto, shall be afterward declared. Now in this sense no man living ever distinguished between grace and virtue, any otherwise than the cause and the effect are to be, or may be distinguished: much less was any person ever so brutish as to fancy an inconsistency between them. For take grace in one sense, and it is the efficient cause of this virtue, or of these virtues which are the effects of it; and in another they are all graces themselves. For that which is wrought in us by grace is grace; as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

To this purpose something may be spoken concerning grace also, the other term, whose ambiguity renders the discourse under consideration somewhat intricate and perplexed. Now as the former term of moral virtue owes its original to the schools of philosophy, and its use was borrowed from them; so this of grace is purely scriptural and evangelical. The world knows nothing of it but what is declared in the word of God, especially in the gospel, 'for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus

Christ.' All the books of the ancient philosophers, will not give us the least light into that notion of grace, which the Scripture declares unto us. As then we allowed the sense of the former term given unto it by its first coiners and users, so we cannot but think it equal, that men be precisely tied up in their conceptions about grace, unto what is delivered in the Scripture concerning it; as having no other rule either to frame them, or judge of them. And this we shall attend unto. Not that I here design to treat of the nature of gospel grace in general; but whereas all the divines that ever I have read on these things, whether ancient or modern (and I have not troubled myself to consider whether they were systematical ones only or otherwise qualified) allow some distinctions of this term to be necessary, for the right understanding of those passages of Scripture wherein it is made use of, I shall mention that or those only, which are so unto the right apprehension of what is at present under debate.

First, therefore, Grace in the Scripture is taken for the free grace or favour of God towards sinners by Jesus Christ. By this he freely pardoneth them their sins, justifieth and accepteth them, or makes them 'accepted in the beloved.' This certainly is distinct from moral virtue. Secondly, It is taken for the effectual working of the Spirit of God in and upon the minds and souls of believers, thereby quickening them when they were 'dead in trespasses and sins,' regenerating of them, creating a new heart in them, implanting his image upon them: neither I presume will this be called moral virtue. Thirdly, For the actual supplies of assistance and ability given to believers, so to enable them unto every duty in particular, which in the gospel is required of them; 'for he works in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' As yet the former distinction will appear necessary. Fourthly, For the effects wrought and produced by this operation of God and his grace in the hearts and minds of them that believe; which are either habitual in the spiritual disposition of their minds, or actual in their operation; all which are called grace. It may be our author will be apt to think that I 'cant,' 'use phrases,' or 'fulsome metaphors.' But besides that I can confirm these distinctions, and the necessity of them, and the words wherein they are expressed,

from the Scriptures and ancient fathers, I can give them him for the substance of them out of very learned divines, whether systematical or no I know not; but this I know, they were not long since bishops of the church of England.

We are now in the next place to inquire into the mind of our author in these things; for, from his apprehensions about them, he frames a mighty difference between himself and those whom he opposeth, and from thence takes occasion and advantage afresh to revile and reproach them.

First, therefore, He declares his judgment that the moral virtues which he treats of do consist of men's observance of the law of nature, of the dictates of reason and precepts thereof.

Secondly, That the substance, yea, the whole of religion consists in these virtues or duties; so that by the observation of them men may attain everlasting happiness.

Thirdly, That there is no actual concurrence of present grace enabling men to perform these duties, or to exercise these virtues, but they are called grace on another account.

Fourthly, That his adversaries are so far from making virtue and grace to be the same, that they make them inconsistent. And these things shall we take into a brief examination according as indeed they do deserve.

The first of them he plainly and more than once affirms; nor shall I contend with him about it. So he speaks, p. 68. 'The practice of virtue consists in living suitably to the dictates of reason and nature, and this is the substance and main design of all the laws of religion, to oblige mankind to behave themselves in all their actions as becomes creatures endowed with reason and understanding, and in ways suitable to rational beings, to prepare and qualify themselves for the state of glory and immortality.' This is a plain description both of the rule of moral virtues and of the nature of them. The law of reason and nature is the rule; and their own nature, as acting or acted, consists in a suitableness unto rational beings acting to prepare themselves for the state of immortality and glory. The first end of all virtue no doubt. We need not therefore make any farther inquiry into this matter, wherein we are agreed.

Secondly, That the substance, yea, the whole of religion consists in these moral virtues, he fully also declares p. 69.

'Moral virtue having the strongest and most necessary influence upon the end of all religion, viz. man's happiness, it is not only its most material and useful part, but the ultimate end of all its other duties (though I know not how the practice of virtue in this life can be the ultimate end of other duties), 'and all true religion can consist in nothing else but either the practice of virtue itself or the use of those means and instruments that contribute unto it.' So also, p. 70. 'All duties of devotion, excepting only our returns of gratitude, are not essential parts of religion, but are only in order to it, as they tend to the practice of virtue and moral goodness; and their goodness is derived upon them from the moral virtues to which they contribute; and in the same proportion they are conducive to the ends of virtue, they are to be valued among the ministers of religion.' So then the whole duty of man consists in being virtuous, and all that is enjoined beside, is in order thereunto. Hence we are told elsewhere, that 'outward worship is no part of religion.' Again, p. 76. 'All religion must of necessity be resolved into enthusiasm or morality; the former is mere imposture, and therefore all that is true must be reduced to the latter.' But we need not insist on particulars, seeing he promoteth this to confirmation by the best of demonstrations, i. e. an induction of all particulars, which he calls 'a scheme of religion;' wherein yet if any thing necessary be left out or omitted, this best of demonstrations is quickly turned into one of the worst of sophisms. Therefore we have here, no doubt, a just and full representation of all that belongs to Christian religion; and it is as follows, p. 69. 'The whole duty of man refers either to his Creator, or his neighbour, or himself. All that concerns the two last is confessedly of a moral nature; and all that concerns the first consists either in praising of God or praying to him; the former is a branch of the virtue of gratitude, and is nothing but a thankful and humble temper of mind arising from a sense of God's greatness in himself, and his goodness to us. So that this part of devotion issues from the same virtuous quality, that is, the principle of all other resentments and expressions of gratitude, only those acts of it that are terminated on God as their object are styled religious; and therefore gratitude and devotion are not divers things, but only differing names

of the same thing; devotion being nothing else but the virtue of gratitude towards God. The latter, viz. prayer, is either put up in our own or other men's behalf; if for others, it is an act of that virtue we call kindness or charity; if for ourselves, the things we pray for, unless they be the comforts and enjoyments of this life, are some or other virtuous qualities; and therefore the proper and direct use of prayer is to be instrumental to the virtues of morality.' It is of Christian religion that this author treats, as is manifest from his ensuing discourse, and the reason he gives why moral virtues are styled graces. Now I must needs say, that I look on this of our author as the rudest, most imperfect, and weakest scheme of Christian religion that ever yet I saw; so far from comprising an induction of all particulars belonging to it, that there is nothing in it that is constitutive of Christian religion, as such, at all. I wish he had given us a summary of the 'credenda' of it as he hath done of its 'agenda,' that we might have had a prospect of the body of his divinity. The ten commandments would in my mind have done twice as well on this present occasion, with the addition of the explication of them given us in the church catechism. But I am afraid that very catechism may ere long be esteemed fanatical also. One I confess I have read of before, who was of this opinion, that all religion consisted in morality alone. But withal he was so ingenuous as to follow the conduct of his judgment in this matter, unto a full renunciation of the gospel, which is certainly inconsistent with it. This was one Martin Sidelius, a Silesian, who gave the ensuing account of his faith unto Faustus Socinus and his society at Cracovia.

'Cæterum ut sciatis cujus sim religionis, quamvis id scripto meo quod habetis, ostenderim, tamen hic breviter repetam. Et primum quidem doctrina de Messia, seu rege illo promisso, ad meam religionem nihil pertinet: nam rex ille tantum Judæis promissus erat, sicut et bona illa Canaan. Sic etiam circumcisio sacrificia, et reliquæ ceremoniæ Mosis ad me non pertinent, sed tantum populo Judaico promissa data et mandata sunt. Neque ista fuerunt cultus Dei apud Judæos, sed inserviebant cultui divino, et ad cultum deducebant Judæos. Verus autem cultus Dei quem meam religionem appello, est Decalogus: qui est æterna Dei voluntas,

qui Decalogus ideo ad me pertinet, quia etiam mihi a Deo datus est, non quidem per vocem sonantem de cœla, sicut populo Judaico, at per creationem insita est menti meæ; quia autem insitus Decalogus, per corruptionem naturæ humanæ, et pravis consuetudinibus, aliqua ex parte obscuratus est, ideo ad illustrandum eum, adhibeo vocalem Decalogum, qui vocatis Decalogus, ideo etiam ad me, ad omnes populos pertinet, quia cum insito nobis Decalogo consentit, imo idem ille Decalogus est. Hæc est mea sententia de Messia seu rege illo promisso, et hæc est mea religio, quam coram vobis ingenue profiteor. Martin Seidelius Olavensis Silesius.'

That is, 'But that you may know of what religion I am, although it is expressed in that writing which you have already, yet I will here briefly repeat it. And first of all, the doctrine of the Messiah, or King that was promised, doth not belong to my religion; for that King was promised to the Jews only; as was the good land of Canaan. So in like manner circumcision, sacrifices, and the rest of the ceremonies of Moses belong not to me, but were promised, given, and granted unto the people of the Jews alone. Neither were they the worship of God among the Jews, but were only subservient unto divine worship, and led the Jews unto it' (the same opinion is maintained by our author concerning all exterior worship): 'but the true worship which I call my religion, is the Decalogue, which is the eternal and immutable will of God' (and here also he hath the consent and concurrence of our author); 'which Decalogue doth therefore belong unto me, because it is given by God to me also; not indeed by a voice sounding from heaven as he gave it to the people of the Jews, but it is implanted in my mind by nature. But because this implanted Decalogue by reason of the corruption of human nature, and through depraved customs, is in some measure obscured, for the illustration of it I make use of the vocal Decalogue, which therefore also belongs unto me and all people; because it consenteth with the Decalogue written in our hearts; yea, is the same law with it. This is my opinion concerning the Messiah, or the promised King; and this is my religion, which I freely acknowledge before ye.' So he: this is plain dealing. He saw clearly, that if all religion and the worship of God consisted in morality only, there was neither need nor use of

Christ, nor the gospel. And accordingly, having no outward advantage by them, discarded them. But setting aside his bold renunciation of Christ as promised, I see not any material difference between the religion of this man and that now contended for. The poor deluded souls among ourselves, who leaving the Scripture, pretend that they are guided by the light within them, are upon the matter of the same religion. For that light being nothing but the dictates of reason and a natural conscience, it extends not itself beyond morality; which some of them understanding, we know what thoughts and apprehensions they have had of Christ and his gospel, and the worship of God instituted therein. For hence it is (and not as our author pretends, with a strange incogitancy concerning them and the Gnostics, that they assert the Scripture to be the only rule of religious worship) that they are fallen into these fond imaginations. And these are the effects which this principle doth naturally lead unto. I confess, then, that I do not agree with our author in and about this scheme of Christian religion; which I shall therefore first briefly put in my exceptions unto, and then offer him another in lieu of it.

First, then, This scheme seems to represent religion unto us as suited to the state of innocency, and that very imperfectly also. For it is composed to answer the former assertions of confining religion to moral virtues, which are granted to consist in our conformity unto and expression of the dictates of reason and the law of nature. Again, the whole duty of man is said to refer either to his Creator, or his neighbour, or himself. Had it been said to God absolutely, another interpretation might have been put upon the words. But being restrained unto him as our Creator, all duties referring to our Redeemer are excluded, or not included, which certainly have some place in Christian religion. Our obedience therein is the obedience of faith, and must answer the special objects of it. And we are taught in the church catechism to believe in God the Father, who made us and all the world; and in God the Son, who redeemed us and all mankind; and in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies us and all the elect people of God. Now these distinct acts of faith, have distinct acts of obedience attending them; whereas none here are admitted, or at least required, but those which fall under the first head. It is also very im-

perfect as a description of natural religion, or the duties of the law of nature. For the principal duties of it, such as fear, love, trust, affiance of and in God, are wholly omitted; nor will they be reduced unto either of the heads which all religion is here distributed unto. For gratitude unto God hath respect formally and directly to the benefits we ourselves are made partakers of. But these duties are eternally necessary on the consideration of the nature of God himself, antecedent unto the consideration of his communicating of himself unto us by his benefits. Prayer proceeds from them; and it is an odd method to reduce the cause under the head of its effect. And prayer itself is made at length not to be so much a moral virtue, as somewhat instrumental to the vitues of morality.

Secondly, I cannot think we have here a complete representation of Christian religion, nor an induction of all its particulars, because we have neither supposition nor assertion of sin, or a Redeemer, or any duty with respect unto them. Gratitude and prayer I confess are two heads, whereunto sundry duties of natural religion without respect unto these things may be reduced. But since the fall of Adam, there was never any religion in the world accepted with God, that was not built and founded on the supposition of them, and whose principal duties towards God did not respect them. To prescribe now unto us a religion as it respects God, without those duties which arise from the consideration of sin, and a Redeemer, is to persuade us to throw away our bibles. Sin, and the condition of all men on the account thereof, what God requires of them with reference thereunto, the way that God hath found out, proposed, and requires of us to make use of, that we may be delivered from that condition, with the duties necessary to that end, do even constitute and make up that religion which the Scripture teacheth us, and which as it summarily expresseth itself, consists in repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; neither of which, nor scarce any thing that belongs unto them, appears in this scheme. So that,

Thirdly, The most important duties of Christian religion are here not only omitted but excluded. Where shall we find any place here to introduce repentance; and as belonging thereunto conviction of sin, humiliation, godly sorrow,

conversion itself to God? For my part I will never be of that religion where these duties towards God have no place. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with all that is necessary to it, preparatory for it, included in it, and consequential on it, are in like manner cast out of the verge of religious duties here schematized. An endeavour to fly from the wrath to come, to receive Jesus Christ, to accept of the atonement, to seek after the forgiveness of sins by him (that we may cant a little), and to give up our souls in universal obedience to all his commands, belong also to the duties of that religion towards God which the Scripture prescribeth unto us; but here they appear not in the least intimation of them. No more do the duties which though generally included in the law of loving God above all, yet are prescribed and determined in the gospel alone. Such are self-denial, readiness to take up the cross, and the like. Besides, all the duties wherein our Christian conflict against our spiritual adversaries doth consist, and in especial the whole of our duty towards God in the mortification of sin, can be of no consideration there, where no supposition of sin is made or allowed. But there would be no end if all exceptions of this nature, that readily offer themselves, might here have admittance. If this be the religion of our adversaries in these things, if this be a perfect scheme of its duties towards God, and induction of all its particulars; let our author insult over, and reproach them whilst he pleaseth, who blame it as insufficient without grace and godliness: I would not be in the condition of them who trust their eternal concernment to mere observance of it; as knowing that 'there is no name under heaven given unto men whereby they may be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ.' It will be in vain pretended, that it is not a description of Christian religion, but of religion as religion in general, that is here attempted. For besides that, it is Christian religion, and that as used and practised by Christians, which is alone under consideration; and an introduction of religion here under any other notion would be grievously inconsistent and incoherent with the whole discourse. It is acknowledged by our author in the progress of his disputation, as was before observed, when he gives a reason why moral virtue is styled grace, which is peculiar and appro-

priate to Christian religion alone. Besides, to talk now of a religion in the world, which either hath been, or may be, since the fall of Adam without respect unto sin, is to build castles in the air. All the religion that God now requires, prescribes, accepts, that is or can be, is the religion of sinners, or of those who are such, and of them as such, though also under other qualifications. On many accounts, therefore, this scheme of religion or religious duties towards God, is exceedingly insufficient and imperfect. To lay it therefore as a foundation whereon to stand, and revile them who plead for a superaddition unto it of grace and godliness, is an undertaking from whence no great success is to be expected.

I can easily supply another scheme of religion in the room of this, which though it have not any such contexture of method, nor is set out with such gaudy words as those which our author hath at his disposal, yet I am confident in the confession of all Christians shall give a better account than what is here offered unto us both of the religion we profess, and of the duties that God requires therein; and this taken out of one epistle of St. Paul; namely, that to the Romans. And I shall do it as things come to mind in the haste wherein I am writing. He then gives us his scheme to this purpose: as first, That all men sinned in Adam, came short of the glory of God, and rendered themselves liable to death and the whole curse of the law. Then, that they do all, as left to themselves, accumulate their original sin and transgression, with a world of actual sins, and provocations of God. That against men in this condition, God testifies his wrath and displeasure, both in his works and by his word. Hence it necessarily follows, that the first duty of man towards God is to be sensible of this condition, of the guilt of sin, with a fear of the wrath and judgment due to them. Then he informs us, that neither the Jews by the law, nor the Gentiles by the light of nature, could disentangle themselves from this state, or do that which is pleasing unto God, so as they might obtain forgiveness of sin and acceptation with him. This bespeaks unto all the great duty towards God, of their acknowledgment unto him of their miserable and helpless condition, with all those affections and subordinate duties, wherewith it is attended. In this state he declares, that God himself in his

infinite wisdom, goodness, and grace, provided a remedy, a way of relief; on which he hath put such an impression of his glorious excellencies, as may stir up the hearts of his creatures to endeavour a return unto him from their apostacy; and that this remedy consists in his 'setting forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of sin;' which he proposeth unto men for their receiving and acceptance. This renders it the greatest duty of mankind towards God, to believe in the Son of God so set forth, to seek after an interest in him, or being made partaker of him; for this is the great work that God requires, namely, that we believe on him whom he hath sent. Again, he declares that God justifieth them who so believe, pardoning their sins, and imputing righteousness unto them; whereon innumerable duties do depend, even all the obedience that Christ requires of us; seeing in our believing in him, we accept him to be our king to rule, govern, and conduct our souls to God. And all these are religious duties towards God. He declares, moreover, that whereas men are by nature 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and stand in need of a new spiritual life, to be born again, that they may live unto God; that God in Jesus Christ doth by his Spirit quicken them, and regenerate them, and work in them a new principle of spiritual life; whence it is their great duty towards God (in this religion of St. Paul) to comply with, and to yield obedience unto, all the ways and methods that God is pleased to use in the accomplishment of this work upon them, the especial duties whereof are too many to be instanced in. But he farther manifests, that notwithstanding the regeneration of men by the Spirit, and their conversion to God, there yet continues in them a remainder of the principle of corrupted nature, which he calls 'the flesh,' and 'indwelling sin,' that is of itself wholly 'enmity against God,' and as far it abides in any, inclines the heart and mind unto sin, which is to be watched against and opposed. And on this head, he introduceth the great religious duty towards God of our spiritual conflict against sin, and of the mortification of it, wherein those that believe are to be exercised all the days of their lives, and wherein their principal duty towards God doth consist, and without which they can perform no other in a due manner. Moreover, he farther adds the great gospel privi-

lege of the communication of the Spirit of Christ unto believers, for their sanctification, consolation, and edification; with the duties of thankfulness towards God, joy and rejoicing in him, cheerfulness under trials, afflictions, and persecutions, and sundry others that on that account are required of us, all religious duties towards God, in the religion by him proposed unto us. Having laid these foundations, and manifested how they all proceed from the eternal counsel and free grace of God, in which it is our duty to admire, adore, and praise him, he declareth how hereby, and on the account of these things, we are bound unto all holiness, righteousness, godliness, honesty, and usefulness in this world, in all relations and conditions whatsoever; declaring our duties in churches, according to our especial interest in them towards believers, and towards all men in the world in our several relations; in obedience to magistrates, and all superiors; in a word, in universal observance of the whole will and all the commands of God. Now whether any one will call this a scheme or no, or allow it to have any thing of method in it or no, I neither know nor care; but am persuaded that it makes a better, more plain, and intelligible representation of the religious duties towards God which Christian religion requires of us, unto all that suppose this whole religion to depend on divine revelation, than that of our author. But I find myself in a digression; the end of this discourse was only to manifest the sentiments of our author, on the second head before laid down, which I think are sufficiently evinced.

The third is, That there is no actual work of present grace, either to fit the persons, of whom these duties of moral virtues are required unto the performance of them, or to work and effect them in them. For although they are called graces, and the graces of the Spirit, in the Scripture, yet that is upon another account; as he declares himself, p. 72. 'All that the Scripture intends by the graces of the Spirit, are only virtuous qualities of the soul that are therefore styled graces, because they are derived purely from God's free grace and goodness, in that in the first ages of Christianity, he was pleased, out of his infinite concern for its propagation, in a miraculous manner to inspire its converts with all sorts of virtue.' 'Virtuous qualities of the soul' is a very

ambiguous expression. Take these virtuous qualities for a new principle of spiritual life, consisting in the habitual disposition, inclination, and ability of mind unto the things required of us in the will of God, or unto the acts of religious obedience, and it may express the graces of the Spirit; which are yet far enough from being so called upon the account here mentioned. But these virtuous qualities, are to be interpreted according to the tenour of the preceding discourses, that have already passed under examination. Let now our author produce any one writer of the church of God, from first to last, of any repute or acceptation, from the day that the name of Christian was known in the world, unto this wherein we live, giving us this account why the fruits of the Spirit, the virtuous or gracious qualities of the minds of believers, are called graces that here he gives, and I will give him my thanks publicly for his discovery. For if this be the only reason why any thing in believers is called grace, why virtues are graces, namely, because God was pleased in the first ages of Christianity miraculously to inspire its converts with all sorts of virtue, then there is no communication of grace unto any, no work of grace in and upon any, in an ordinary way, through the ministry of the gospel, in these latter ages. The whole being and efficacy of grace, according to this notion, is to be confined unto the miraculous operations of God in gospel concernments, in the first ages, whence a denomination in the Scripture is cast upon our virtues, when obtained and exercised by and in our own strength. Now this plainly overthrows the whole gospel, and contains a Pelagianism that Pelagius himself never did nor durst avow.

Are these things then so indeed? that God did from his free grace and goodness, miraculously inspire the first converts of Christianity with all sorts of virtues, but that he doth not still continue to put forth in any, actually, the efficacy of his grace, or make them gracious, holy, believing, obedient to himself, and to work in them all suitable actings towards himself and others? Then farewell Scripture, the covenant of grace, the intercession of Christ, yea, all the ancient fathers, councils, schoolmen, and most of the Jesuits themselves. Many have been the disputes amongst Christians about the nature of grace, the rule of its dispensation,

the manner and way of its operation, its efficacy, concurrence, and co-operation in the wills of men; but that there is no dispensation of it, no operation but what was miraculous in the first converts of the gospel, was, I think, until now undiscovered. Nor can it be here pretended, that although the virtuous qualities of our minds and their exercise, by which it is intended all the obedience that God requireth of us, in principle and practice, that we may please him, and come to the enjoyment of him, are not said to be called graces, only on the account mentioned: for as in respect of us they are not so termed at all, so if the term 'only' be not understood, the whole discourse is impertinent and ridiculous. For those other reasons and accounts that may be taken in, will render that given utterly useless unto our author's intention, and indeed are altogether inconsistent with it. And he hath given us no reason to suppose that he talks after such a weak and preposterous a rate. This then is that which is here asserted, the qualities of our minds and their exercise wherein the virtues pleaded about, and affirmed to contain the whole substance of religion, do consist, are not wrought in us by the grace or Spirit of God through the preaching of the gospel, but are only called graces as before. Now, though here be a plain contradiction to what is delivered but two pages before, namely, 'that we pray for some or other virtuous qualities,' that is doubtless to be wrought in us by the grace of God; yet this present discourse is capable of no other interpretation but that given unto it. And indeed it seems to be the design of some men, to confine all real gifts and graces of the Spirit of God to the first ages of the gospel, and the miraculous operations in it; which is to overthrow the whole gospel, the church, and the ministry of it, as to their use and efficacy, leaving men only the book of the Bible to philosophize upon, as shall be elsewhere demonstrated. Our author indeed tells us, that on the occasion of some men's writings in theology, 'there hath been a buzz and a noise of the Spirit of God in the world.' His expressions are exceedingly suited to pour contempt on what he doth not approve; not so to express what he doth himself intend. But I desire that he and others would speak plain and openly in this matter, that neither others may be deceived nor themselves have occasion to complain that they

are misrepresented; a pretence whereof would probably give them a dispensation to deal very roughly, if not despitefully with them with whom they shall have to do. Doth he therefore think or believe, that there are not now any real gracious operations of the Spirit of God upon the hearts and minds of men in the world? that the dispensation of the Spirit is ceased, as well unto ordinary ministerial gifts, with its sanctifying, renewing, assisting grace, as unto gifts miraculous and extraordinary? that there is no work at all of God upon the hearts of sinners, but that which is purely moral and persuasive by the word? that what is asserted by some concerning the efficacy of the grace of the Spirit, and concerning his gifts, is no more but 'a buzz and a noise?' I wish he would explain himself directly and positively in these things; for they are of great importance. And the loose expressions which we meet with, do give great offence unto some who are apt to think, that as pernicious a heresy as ever infested the church of God, may be covered and cloaked by them.

But to return; in the sense that moral virtue is here taken, I dare boldly pronounce, that there is no villany in the religion of those men, who distinguish between virtue and grace; that is, there not in their so doing; this being the known and avowed religion of Christianity. It is granted, that wherever grace is, there is virtue. For grace will produce and effect all virtues in the soul whatever. But virtue on the other side may be where there is no grace, which is sufficient to confirm a distinction between them. It was so in sundry of the heathen of old; though now it be pretended that grace is nothing but an occasional denomination of virtue, not that it is the cause or principle of it. But the proofs produced by our author are exceedingly incompetent unto the end whereunto they are applied. For that place of the apostle, Gal. v. 22, 23. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Though our author should be allowed to turn joy into cheerfulness, peace into peaceableness, faith into faithfulness, as he hath done, corruptly enough, to accommodate it to his purpose, yet it will no way reach his end, nor satisfy his intention. For doth it follow, that because the Spirit effects all these moral virtues in a new and gra-

cious manner, and with a direction to a new and special end in believers, either that these things are nothing but mere moral virtues, not wrought in us by the grace of God (the contrary whereof is plainly asserted in calling them fruits of the Spirit), or that wherever there is moral virtue, though not so wrought by the Spirit, that there is grace also, because virtue and grace are the same? If these are the expositions of Scripture, which we may expect from them who make such outcries against other men's perverting and corrupting of it, the matter is not like to be much mended with us, for aught I can see, upon their taking of that work into their own hands. And indeed his quotation of this place is pretty odd. He doth not in the print express the words as he useth, and as he doth those of another Scripture immediately, in a different character, as the direct words of the apostle, that no man may charge him with a false allegation of the text. Yet he repeats all the words of it which he intends to use to his purpose, somewhat altering the expressions. But he hath had, I fear, some unhappiness in his explanations. By joy he would have cheerfulness intended. But what is meant by cheerfulness is much more uncertain than what is intended by joy. Mirth it may be in conversation is aimed at, or somewhat of that nature. But how remote this is from that spiritual joy, which is recommended unto us in the Scripture, and is affirmed to be unspeakable and full of glory, he that knows not is scarce meet to paraphrase upon St. Paul's epistles. Neither is that peace with God through Jesus Christ, which is wrought in the hearts of believers by the Holy Ghost, who 'creates the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, unto them,' a matter of any more affinity with a moral peaceableness of mind and affections. Our faith also in God, and our faithfulness in our duties, trusts, offices, and employments, are sufficiently distinct. So palpably must the Scripture be corrupted and wrested to be made serviceable to this presumption. He yet adds another proof to the same purpose, if any man know distinctly what that purpose is; namely, Titus ii. 11. where he tells us that the same apostle makes the grace of God to consist in gratitude towards God, temperance towards ourselves, and justice towards our neighbours. But these things are not so. For the apostle doth not say, that the grace of God doth con-

sist in these things, but that the 'grace of God teacheth us these things.' Neither is the grace here intended any subjective or inherent grace, or, to speak with our author, any virtuous quality or virtue, but the love and grace of God himself, in sending Jesus Christ as declared in the gospel, was, is manifest in the words and context beyond contradiction. And I cannot but wonder how our author, desirous to prove that the whole of our religion consists in moral virtues, and these only called graces because of the miraculous operations of God from his own grace in the first gospel converts, should endeavour to do it by these two testimonies: the first whereof expressly assigns the duties of morality as in believers, to the operations of the Spirit, and the latter in his judgment makes them to proceed from grace.

Our last inquiry is into what he ascribes unto his adversaries in this matter, and how he deals with them thereupon. This therefore he informs us, p. 71. 'It is not enough, say they, to be completely virtuous, unless ye have grace too.' I can scarce believe that ever he heard any one of them say so, or ever read it in any of their writings. For there is nothing that they are more positive in, than that men cannot in any sense be completely virtuous unless they have grace; and so cannot suppose them to be so, who have it not. They say, indeed, that moral virtues, as before described, so far as they are attainable by, or may be exercised in, the strength of men's own wills and natural faculties, are not enough to please God and to make men accepted with him. So that virtue as it may be without grace, and some virtues may be so for the substance of them, is not available unto salvation. And I had almost said, that he is no Christian that is of another mind. In a word, virtue is, or may be without grace, in all or any of the acceptations of it before laid down. Where it is without the favour of God and the pardon of sin, where it is without the renewing of our natures, and the endowment of our persons with a principle of spiritual life, where it is not wrought in us by present efficacious grace, it is not enough; nor will serve any man's turn with respect unto the everlasting concernments of his soul.

But he gives in his exceptions, p. 71. 'But when,' saith he, 'we have set aside all manner of virtue, let them tell me what remains to be called grace, and give me any notion

of it distinct from all morality, that consists in the right order and government of our actions in all our relations, and so comprehends all our duty; and therefore if grace be not included in it, it is but a phantasm and an imaginary thing.' I say, first, where grace is, we cannot set aside virtue, because it will and doth produce and effect it in the minds of men. But virtue may be where grace is not, in the sense so often declared. Secondly, Take moral virtue in the notion of it here received and explained by our author, and I have given sundry instances before of gracious duties that come not within the verge or compass of the scheme given us of it. Thirdly, The whole aimed at lies in this, that virtue that governs our actions in all our duties may be considered either as the duty we owe to the law of nature for the ends of it, to be performed in the strength of nature and by the direction of it, or it may be considered as it is an especial effect of the grace of God in us, which gives it a new principle and a new end, and a new respect unto the covenant of grace wherein we walk with God, the consideration whereof frustrates the intention of our author in this discourse.

But he renews his charge, p. 73. 'So destructive of all true and real goodness is the very religion of those men that are wont to set grace at odds with virtue, and are so far from making them the same, that they make them inconsistent; and though a man be exact in all the duties of moral goodness, yet if he be a graceless person (i. e. void of I know not what imaginary godliness) he is but in a cleaner way to hell, and his conversion is more hopeless than the vilest and most notorious sinners; and the morally righteous man is at a greater distance from grace than the profane; and better be lewd and debauched than live an honest and virtuous life, if you are not of the godly party;' with much more to this purpose. For the men that are wont to set grace at odds with virtue, and are so far from making them the same that they make them inconsistent, I wish our author would discover them, that he might take us along with him in his detestation of them. It is not unlikely, if all be true that is told of them, but that the Gnostics might have some principles not unlike this; but beside them I never heard of any that were of this mind in the world. And in truth, the liberty that is taken in these discourses is a great instance of

the morality under consideration. But the following words will direct us where these things are charged. For some say, that if 'a man be exact in all the duties of moral goodness, yet if he be a graceless person, void of I know not what imaginary godliness, he is but in a cleaner way to hell.' I think I know both what, and who are intended, and that both are dealt withal with that candour we have been now accustomed unto. But, first, you will scarce find those you intend over-forward in granting that men may be 'exact in all the duties of moral goodness,' and yet be graceless persons. For taking moral virtues to comprehend, as you do, their duties towards God, they will tell you such persons cannot perform one of them aright, much less all of them exactly. For they can neither trust in God, nor believe him, nor fear him, nor glorify him, in a due manner. Take the duties of moral goodness for the duties of the law between man and man, and the observation of the outward duties of God's worship, and they say, indeed, that they may be so performed as that in respect of them men may be blameless, and yet be graceless. For that account, if they mistake not, the apostle Paul gives of himself, Phil. iii. 6—8. They do say, therefore, that many of these duties, so as to be useful in the world and blameless before men, they may perform who are yet graceless. Thirdly, This gracelessness is said to consist in being 'void of I know not what imaginary godliness.' No, no; it is to be void of the Spirit of God, of the grace of Christ, not to be born again, not to have a new spiritual life in Christ, not to be united to him, or ingrafted in him, not to be accepted and made an heir of God, and enabled to a due spiritual evangelical performance of all duties of obedience, according to the tenour of the covenant; these are the things intended. And as many with their moral duties may come short of them and be graceless; so those to whom they are imaginary must reject the whole gospel of Christ as an imagination. And I must say, to give matter of a new charge, that to the best observation that I have been able to make in the world, none have been, nor are more negligent in the principal duties of morality, than those who are aptest to exalt them above the gospel and the whole mystery of it, unless morality do consist in such a course of life and conversation as I will not at present characterize.

It is farther added, that the 'conversion of such a one is more hopeless than the vilest and most notorious sinners; and the morally righteous man,' &c. Setting aside the invidious expression of what is here reflected upon, and there is nothing more openly taught inthe gospel. The Pharisees were a people morally righteous, whereon they trusted to themselves that they were righteous; and yet our Lord Jesus Christ told them, that 'publicans and harlots,' the vilest and most notorious of sinners, entered before them into the kingdom of God. And where men trust to their own righteousness, their own duties, be they moral or what they will, there are no men farther from the way of the gospel than they. Nay, our Saviour lets us know, that as such the gospel is not concerned in them, nor they in it. 'He came not,' he says, 'to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' not men justifying, or lifting up themselves in a conceit of their moral duties, but those who are burdened and laden with a sense of their sins. And so in like manner, that 'the whole have no need of the physician, but the sick;' and St. Paul declares what enemies they were to the righteousness of God 'who went about to set up their own righteousness;' Rom. x. Now because moral duties are incumbent on all persons, at all times, they are continually pressed upon all, from a sense of the authority and command of God, indispensably requiring all men's attendance unto them. Yet such is the deceitfulness of the heart of man, and the power of unbelief, that oftentimes persons, who through their education, or following convictions, have been brought to some observance of them; and being not enlightened in their minds to discern their insufficiency unto the great end of salvation, in and of themselves, are apt to take up with them, and to rest in them, without ever coming to sincere repentance towards God, or faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; whereas others, the guilt of whose sins doth unavoidably press upon them, as it did on the publicans and sinners of old, are ofttimes more ready to look out after relief. And those who question these things do nothing but manifest their ignorance in the Scripture, and want of experience in the work of the ministry. But yet, upon the account of the charge mentioned, so unduly framed, and impotently managed, our author makes an excursion into such an extravagancy of

reproaches as is scarce exceeded in his whole book : part of it I have considered before in our view of his preface ; and I am now so used to the noise and bluster wherewith he pours out the storm of his indignation, that I am altogether unconcerned in it, and cannot prevail with myself to give it any farther consideration.

These things, though not direct to the argument in hand, and which on that account might have been neglected, yet supposing that the author placed as much of his design in them, as in any part of his discourse, I could not wholly omit the consideration of; not so much out of a desire for their vindication who are unduly traduced in them, as to plead for the gospel itself, and to lay a foundation of a farther defence of the truths of it, if occasion shall so require. And we have also here an insight into the judgment of our author, or his mistake in this matter. He tells us, that it is better to tolerate debaucheries and immoralities, than liberty of conscience, for men to worship God according to their light and persuasion. Now all religion according to him consisting in morality, to tolerate immoralities and debaucheries in conversation, is plainly to tolerate atheism ; which, it seems, is more eligible than to grant liberty of conscience, unto them who differ from the present establishment, only as to some things belonging to the outward worship of God.

These things being premised, the argument itself, pleaded in this chapter, is capable of a speedy dispatch. It is to this purpose : 'The magistrate hath power over the consciences of men in reference to morals, or moral virtues, which are the principal things in religion, and therefore much more hath so in reference to the worship of God, which is of less importance.' We have complained before of the ambiguity of these general terms, but it is to no purpose to do so any more, seeing that we are not like to be relieved in this discourse. Let us then take things as we find them, and satisfy ourselves in the intention of the author, by that declaration which he makes of it up and down the chapter; but yet here we are at a loss also. When he speaks, or seems to speak to this purpose, whether in the confirmation of the proposition, or the inference, whereof his arguments consists, what he says is cast into such an intertexture with invec-

tives and reproaches, and expressed in such a loose declamatory manner, as it is hard to discover or find out what it is that he intends. Suppose therefore, in the first place, that a man should call his consequent into question; namely, that because the magistrate hath power over the consciences of his subjects in morals, that therefore he hath so also in matters of instituted worship; how would he confirm and vindicate it? Two things are all I can observe that are offered in the confirmation of it. First, That 'these things of morality, moral virtues, are of more importance in religion than the outward worship of God,' which the amplitude of power before asserted is now reducing to a respect unto. Secondly, That 'there is much more danger of his erring and mistaking in things of morality, than in things of outward worship, because of their great weight and importance.' These things are pleaded, p. 28. and elsewhere up and down. That any thing else is offered in the confirmation of this consequent I find not. And it may be some will think these proofs to be very weak and feeble, unable to sustain the weight that is laid upon them. For it is certain that the first rule, that he that hath power over the greater hath so over the lesser, doth not hold unless it be in things of the same nature and kind; and it is no less certain and evident, that there is an especial and formal difference between these things, namely, moral virtues, and instituted worship; the one depending as to their being and discovery on the light of nature, and the dictates of that reason which is common to all, and speaks the same language in the consciences of all mankind; the other on pure revelation, which may be, and is variously apprehended. Hence it is, that whereas there is no difference in the world about what is virtue and what is not, there is no agreement about what belongs to divine worship and what doth not.

Again, lesser things may be exempted from that power and authority by especial privilege or law, which hath the disposal of greater committed unto it, and intrusted with it. As the magistrate amongst us may take away the life of a man, which is the greatest of his concernments, the name of his all, for felony; but cannot take away his estate or inheritance of land, which is a far less concernment unto him,

if it be antecedently settled by law to other uses than his own. And if it cannot be proved that the disposal of the worship of God, as to what doth really and truly belong unto it, and all the parts of it, is exempted from all human power by special law and privilege, let it be disposed of as whoso will shall judge meet.

Nor is the latter consideration suggested to enforce this consequent of any more validity; namely, 'that there is more danger of the magistrate's erring or mistakes about moral virtue, than about rites of worship;' because that is of most concernment in religion. For it is true, that suppose a man to walk on the top of a high house or tower, on a plain floor with battlements or walls round about him, there will be more danger of breaking his neck, if he should fall from thence, than if he should fall from the top of a narrow wall that had not the fourth part of the height of the house. But there would not be so much danger of falling. For from the top of the house as circumstantiated he cannot fall, unless he will wilfully and violently cast himself down headlong; and on the top of the wall, it may be, he cannot stand, with the utmost of his heed and endeavours. The magistrate cannot mistake about moral virtues unless he will do it wilfully. They have their station fixed in the world, on the same ground and evidence with the magistracy itself. The same evidence, the same common consent and suffrage of mankind is given unto moral virtues, as is to any government in the world. And to suppose a supreme magistrate, a lawgiver, to mistake in these things, in judging whether justice, and temperance, or fortitude, be virtues or no, and that in their legislative capacity, is ridiculous. Neither Nero nor Caligula were ever in danger of any such misadventure. All the magistrates in the world at this day, are agreed about these things. But as to what concerns the worship of God, they are all at variance. There is no such evidence in these things, no such common suffrage about them, as to free any absolutely from failings and mistakes; so that in respect of them, and not of the other, lies the principal danger of miscarrying, as to their determination and administration. Supposing therefore the premises our author lays down to be true, his inference from

them is feeble, and obnoxious to various impeachments, whereof I have given some few instances only, which shall be increased if occasion require.

But the assertion itself, which is the foundation of these consequences, is utterly remote from accuracy and truth. It is said, that 'the magistrate hath power over the consciences of men in reference unto moral duties, which are the principal parts of religion.' Our first and most difficult inquiry, is after the meaning of this proposition, the latter after its truth. I ask then, first, Whether he hath power over the consciences of men with respect unto moral virtue, and over moral virtue itself, as virtue, and as a part of religion, or on some other account? If his power respect virtue as a part of religion, then it equally extends itself to all that is so, by virtue of a rule which will not be easily everted. But it doth not appear that it so extends itself as to plead an obliging authority in reference unto all duties. For let but the scheme of moral duties, especially those whose object is God, given us by our author, be considered, and it will quickly be discerned how many of them are exempted from all human cognizance and authority; and that from and by their nature as well as their use in the world. And it is in vain to ascribe an authority to magistrates which they have no power to exert, or take cognizance whether it be obeyed or no. And what can they do therein with respect unto gratitude to God, which holds the first place in the scheme of moral virtues here given in unto us. We are told also, p. 83. 'That in matters both of moral virtue, and divine worship, there are some rules of good and evil that are of an eternal and unchangeable obligation, and these can never be prejudiced or altered by any human power, because the reason of their obligation arises from a necessity and constitution of nature, and therefore must be as perpetual as that; but then there are other rules of duty that are alterable according to the various accidents, changes, and conditions of human life, and depend chiefly upon contracts and positive laws of kingdoms.' It would not be unworthy our inquiry to consider what rules of moral duty they are, which are alterable and depend on accidents and contracts. But we might easily find work enough, should we call all such fond assertions to a just examination. Neither doth the distinc-

tion here given us between various rules of moral virtue, very well answer what we are told, p. 69. namely, 'that every particular virtue is therefore such, because it is a resemblance and imitation of some of the divine attributes,' which I suppose they are not, whose rules and forms are alterable upon accidents and occasions. And we are taught also, p. 68. that the 'practice of virtue consists in living suitable to the dictates of reason and nature;' which are rules not variable and changeable. There must be some new distinction to reconcile these things, which I cannot at present think of. That which I would inquire from hence is, Whether the magistrate have power over the consciences of men in reference unto those things in morality, whose rules of good and evil are of an eternal obligation? That he hath not is evidently implied in this place. And I shall not enter into the confusion of the ensuing discourse, where the latter sort of rules for virtue, the other member of the distinction, are turned into various methods of executing laws about outward acts of virtue or vice; and the virtues themselves into outward expressions and significations of duty; for I have at present no contest with this author about his manner of writing, nor do intend to have. It is enough that here at once all the principal and most important virtues are vindicated to their own unalterable rules as such, and the consciences of men in reference unto them put under another jurisdiction. And what then becomes of this argument, That the magistrate must have power over the consciences of men in matters of divine worship, because he hath so in things moral which are of greater importance, when what is so of importance, is exempted from his power.

Hence it sufficiently appears, that the authority of the magistrate over men, with reference unto moral virtue and duty, doth not respect virtue as virtue, but hath some other consideration. Now what this is, is evident unto all. How moral virtues do belong unto religion and are parts of it, hath been before declared. But God, who hath ordered all things in weight and measure, hath fore-designed them also to another end and purpose. For preparing mankind for political society in the world among themselves for a time, as well as for religious obedience unto himself, he inlaid his

nature and composition with principles suited to both those ends, and appointed them to be acted with different respects unto them. Hence moral virtues, notwithstanding their peculiar tendency unto him, are appointed to be the instrument and ligament of human society also. As the law of Moses had in it a typical end, use, and signification, with respect to Christ and the gospel, and a political use as the instrument of the government of the nation of the Jews. Now the power of the magistrate in respect of moral virtues, is in their latter use; namely, as they relate to human policy, which is concerned in the outward actings of them. This therefore is granted; and we shall inquire farther, Whether any more be proved, namely, that the magistrate hath power over the outward actings of virtue and vice, so far as human society or public tranquillity is concerned in them, and on that account?

Secondly, It may be inquired, what is the power and authority over moral virtues, which is here ascribed unto the civil magistrate, and over the consciences of men with respect unto them? Is it such as to make that to be virtue which was not virtue before, or which was vice, and oblige men in conscience to practise it as virtue? This would go a great way indeed, and answer somewhat of what is, or as it is said, may be done in the worship of God, when that is made a part of it which was not so before. But what name shall these new virtues be called by? A new virtue, both as to its acts and objects, will as much fly the imaginations of men, as a sixth sense doth. It may be our author will satisfy us as to this inquiry; for he tells us, p. 80. that he hath power 'to make that a particular of the divine law, that God hath not made so.' I wish he had declared himself how, and wherein; for I am afraid this expression as here it lies is offensive. The divine law is divine, and so is every particular of it; and how a man can make a thing divine, that is not so of itself, nor by divine institution, is hard to find out. It may be that only the subject matter of the law, and not the law itself formally is intended; and to make a thing a particular of the divine law, is no more but to make the divine law require that in particular of a man which it did not require of him before. But this particular, refers to the nature, essence, and being of the thing, or to the acting and occasion

of it in particular. And if it be taken in the latter sense, here is no more ascribed unto the magistrate, than is common with him to every man in the world. For every one that puts himself into new circumstances, or new relations, doth so make that unto him to be a particular of the divine law, which was not so before; for he is bound and obliged unto the actual performance of many duties, which as so circumstantiated, he was not bound unto before.

But somewhat else seems to be intended from the ensuing discourse: 'they are fully empowered to declare new instances of virtue and vice, and to introduce new duties in the most important parts of religion.' And yet I am still at the same loss. For by his 'declaring new instances of virtue and vice,' I suppose he intends an authoritative declaration, such as that they have no other foundation, nor need none to make them what they are. They are new instances of virtue and vice, because so declared. And this suits unto the 'introducing of new duties in the most important parts of religion,' made duties by that introduction. I wish I could yet learn what these 'new instances of virtue and vice' are, or mean; whether they are new as virtues and vices, or as instances. For the first, would I could see a new practice of old virtues; but to tell you the truth, I care not for any of the new virtues, that I have lately observed in the world; nor do I hope ever to see any better new ones.

If it be the instances that are new, I wish again I knew what were more in them, than the actual and occasional exercise of old duties. Pages 79, 80. conduce most to extricate us out of these ambiguities. There we are informed, 'that the laws of every nation do distinguish and settle men's rights and properties,' and that distinctly with respect whereunto justice, that prime natural virtue, is in particular instances to be exercised. And, p. 84. it is farther declared, 'that in the administration of justice, there may be great difference in the constitution of penalties and execution of men.' This it seems is that which is aimed at; the magistrate by his laws determines, whether Titius have set his hedge upon Caius's ground; and whether Sempronius hath rightly conveyed his land or house, to his son, or neighbour; whereby what is just and lawful in itself, is accommodated to the use of political society. He determines

also how persons guilty of death shall be executed, and by whom, and in what manner; whence it must needs follow that he hath power to assign new particulars of the divine law, to declare new bounds, or hedges, of right and wrong, which the law of God neither doth, nor can limit, or hath power over the consciences of men with respect to moral virtues; which was to be demonstrated. Let us lay aside these swelling expressions, and we shall find that all that can be ascribed unto the civil magistrate in this matter, is no more than to preserve property and peace by that rule and power over the outward actions of men which is necessary thereunto.

Having made some inquiry into the terms of moral virtue and the magistrate's power, it remains only that we consider what respect this case hath unto the consciences of men, with reference unto them. And I desire to know, whether all mankind be not obliged in conscience to the observation of all moral virtue, antecedently to the command or authority of the magistrate, who doth only inspect their observation of them as to the concerns of public peace and tranquillity? Certainly, if all moral virtue consists in living suitable to the dictates of reason, as we are told, and in a sense rightly, if the rule of them all and every one, which gives them their formal nature, be the law of our creation, which all mankind enter the world under an indispensable obligation unto, it cannot be denied but that there is such an antecedent obligation to the consciences of men, as that inquired after. But the things mentioned are granted by our author; nor can by any be denied, without offering the highest outrage to Scripture, reason, and the common consent of mankind. Now if this obligation be thus on all men, unto all virtue as virtue, and this absolutely from the authority of God over them and their consciences, how comes an inferior authority to interpose itself between that of God and their consciences, so immediately to oblige them? It is granted, that when the magistrate commandeth and requireth the exercise of any moral duty, in a way suited unto public good and tranquillity, he is to be obeyed for conscience' sake; because he who is the Lord of conscience doth require men to be obedient unto him, whereon they are obliged in conscience so to be. But if the things required

of them be in themselves moral duties, as they are such, their consciences are obliged to observe and exercise them from the command of God, and other obligation unto them as such, they neither have nor can have. But the direction and command for the exercise of them, in these and those circumstances, for the ends of public good whereunto they are directed, belongs unto the magistrate, who is to be obeyed. For as in things merely civil, and which have nothing originally of morality in them, but secondarily only, as they tend to the preservation and welfare of human society, which is a thing morally good, the magistrate is to be obeyed for conscience' sake, and the things themselves, as far as they partake of morality, come directly under the command of God which affects the conscience; so in things that have an inherent and inseparable morality, and so respect God in the first place, when they come to have a civil sanction in reference to their exercise unto public political good, that sanction is to be obeyed out of conscience; but the antecedent obligation that was upon the conscience unto a due exercise of those duties, when made necessary by circumstances, is not superseded, nor any new one added thereunto.

I know what is said, but I find not as yet what is proved from these things concerning the uncontrollable and absolute power of the supreme magistrate over religion and the consciences of men. Some things are added indeed here up and down, about circumstances of divine worship, and the power of ordering them by the magistrate, which though there may be some different conceptions about, yet they no way reach the cause under debate. But as they are expressed by our author, I know not of any one writer in and of the church of England, that hitherto hath so stated them, as they are by him. For he tells us, p. 85. that 'all rituals, ceremonies, postures, and manners of performing the outward expressions of devotion, that are not chargeable with countenancing vice or disgracing the Deity, are capable of being adopted into the ministries of divine service, and are not exempted from being subject to the determinations of human power.' Whether they are so or no, the magistrate, I presume, is to judge; or all this flourish of words and concessions of power, vanish into smoke. His

command of them binds the consciences of men to observe them, according to the principle under consideration. Hence it must be absolutely in the power of every supreme magistrate to impose on the Christian subjects, a greater number of ceremonious observances in the worship of God, and those of greater weight than ever were laid upon the Jews. For who knows not that under the names of 'rituals, ceremonies, postures, manners of performing all divine service,' what a burdensome heap of things are imposed in the Roman church; whereunto as far as I know a thousand more may be added, not chargeable in themselves with either of the crimes, which alone are allowed to be put in, in bar or plea against them? And whether this be the liberty whereunto Jesus Christ hath vindicated his disciples and church, is left unto the judgment of sober men. Outward religious worship we know is to be performed by natural actions; these have their circumstances, and those ofttimes because of the public concernments of the exercise of religion of great importance. These may be ordered by the power, and according to the wisdom of those in authority. But that they should make so many things, as this assertion allows them to make, to belong unto and to be parts of the worship of God, whereof not one is enjoined or required by him, and the consciences of men be thereby obliged unto their observance; I do not believe, nor is it here at all proved.

To close this discourse about the power of obliging the consciences of men, I think our author grants that conscience is immediately obliged to the observation of all things that are good in themselves from the law of our creation. Such things as either the nature of God or our own require from from us, our consciences surely are obliged immediately by the authority of God to observe. Nor can we have any dispensation for the non-performance of our duty, from the interposition of the commands and authority of any of the sons of men. For this would be openly and directly to set up men against God, and to advance them or their authority above him or his. Things evidently deduced, and necessarily following the first principles and dictates of nature, are of the same kind with themselves, and have the authority of God no less enstamped on them than the other; and in respect unto them, conscience cannot by virtue of inferior

commands plead an exemption. Things of mere revelation do remain; and concerning them I desire to know, whether we are not bound to observe and do whatever God in his revealed will commands us to observe and do, and to abstain from whatever he forbids, and this indispensably? If this be denied, I will prove it with the same arguments whereby I can prove that there is a God, and that we are his creatures made to serve him; for the reason of these things is inseparable from the very being of God. Let this be granted, and ascribe what ye will, or please, or can, to the supreme magistrate, and you shall not from me have the least contradiction.

A SURVEY OF THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The third chapter entertains us with a magnificent grant of liberty of conscience. The very first paragraph asserts, a 'liberty of conscience in mankind over all their actions, whether moral or strictly religious.' But lest this should prove a bedlam concession that might mischief the whole design in hand, it is delivered to the power of a keeper, who yet upon examination is no less wild and extravagant, than itself is esteemed absolutely to be. This is, that they have it as far as concerns their judgments, but not their practice; that is, they have liberty of conscience over their actions but not their practices, or over their practices but not over their actions. For upon trial their actions and practices will prove to be the same. And I do not as yet well understand what is this liberty of conscience over men's actions. Is it to do, or not to do, as their consciences dictate to them? This is absolutely denied and opposed in the chapter itself. Is it to judge of their actions as done, whether they be good or evil? This conscience is at no liberty in. For it is determined to a judgment in that kind naturally and necessarily, and must be so whilst it hath the light of nature and word of God to regard, so far as a rule is capable of giving a measure and determination to things to be regulated by it; that is, its moral actings are morally determined. What then this liberty of conscience over men's

actions should be, where they can neither act freely according to their consciences what they are to do, nor abstain from what they are not to do, nor are at liberty to judge what they have done to be good or bad, I cannot divine.

Let us search after an explication of these things in the paragraph itself, whose contents are represented in the words mentioned. Here we are told, that this liberty consists in 'men's thinking of things according to their own persuasion, and therein asserting the freedom of their judgments.' I would be loath to think that this liberty of men's consciences over all their moral actions, should at first dash dwindle into a liberty in speculations; that men may think what they will, opine as they please, in or about things that are not to be brought into practice; but yet as far as I can perceive, I must think so, or matters will come to a worse issue.

But these things must be a little farther examined, and that very briefly. Here is mention of liberty of conscience; but what conscience is, or what that liberty is, is not declared. For conscience, it is called sometimes the mind, sometimes the understanding, sometimes opinion, sometimes described by the liberty of thinking, sometimes termed an imperious faculty, which things without much discourse, and more words than I can now afford to use, are not reconcileable among themselves. Besides, liberty is no proper affection of the mind or understanding. Though I acknowledge the mind and its actings to be naturally free from outward compulsion or coaction, yet it is capable of such a determination from the things proposed unto it, and the manner of their proposal, as to make necessary the elicitation of its acts. It cannot but judge that two and three make five. It is the will that is the proper seat of liberty, and what some suppose to be the ultimate determination of the practical understanding, is indeed an act of the will. It is so if you speak of liberty naturally and morally, and not of state and condition, which are here confounded. But suppose what you will to be conscience, it is moral actions or duties that are here supposed to be the objects of its actings. Now what are, or can be, the thoughts or actings of the mind of man about moral actions, but about their virtue or their vice, their moral good or evil? Nor is a conclusion of what is a man's own duty in reference to the practice of them pos-

sibly to be separated from them. That then which is here asserted is, That a man may think, judge, or conceive such or such a thing to be his duty, and yet have thereby no obligation put upon him to perform it; for conscience, we are informed, hath nothing to do beyond the inward thoughts of men's minds.

To state this matter a little more clearly, let us take conscience in the most usual acceptation of it, and that which answers the experience of every man that ever looks into the affairs and concerns within; and so it is the practical judgment that men make of themselves and of their actions, or what they are to do and what they are not to do, what they have done or what they have omitted, with reference unto the judgment of God, at present declared in their own hearts, and in his word, and to be fully executed at the last day. For we speak of conscience as it is amongst Christians who acknowledge the word of God, and that for a double end: first, as the rule of conscience itself; secondly, as the declaration of the will of God, as to his approbation or rejecting of what we do or omit. Suppose then that a man make a judgment in his conscience, regulated by the word of God, and with respect unto the judgment of God concerning him, that such and such a thing is a duty, and whose performance is required of him; I desire to know whether any obligation be upon him from thence to act accordingly? It is answered, that 'the territory of conscience is confined unto men's thoughts, judgments, and persuasions, and these are free: yea, no doubt; 'but for outward actions there is no remedy, but they must be subject to the cognizance of human laws;' p. 9. Who ever doubted of it? He that would have men so have liberty from outward actions, as not to have those actions cognoscible by the civil power as to the end of public tranquillity, but to have their whole station firmed absolutely in the world upon the plea of conscience, would no doubt lay a foundation for confusion in all government. But what is this to the present inquiry, whether conscience lay an obligation on men, as regulated by the word of God, and respecting him, to practise according to its dictates? It is true enough, that if any of its practices do not please or satisfy the magistrate, their authors must, for aught I know, stand to what will follow, or ensue on them

to their prejudice; but this frees them not from the obligation that is upon them in conscience unto what is their duty. This is that which must be here proved, if any thing be intended unto the purpose of this author, namely, that notwithstanding the judgment of conscience concerning any duty, by the interposition of the authority of the magistrate to the contrary, there is no obligation ensues for the performance of that duty. This is the answer that ought plainly to be returned, and not a suggestion that outward actions must fall under the cognizance of the magistrate; which none ever doubted of, and which is nothing to the present purpose; unless he would have them to fall under the magistrate's cognizance, as that his will should be the supreme rule of them; which I think he cannot prove. But what sense the magistrate will have of the outward actions, wherein the discharge of man's duty doth consist, is of another consideration.

This therefore is the state of the present case applied unto religious worship. Suppose the magistrate command such things in religion, as a man in his conscience guided by the word, and respecting God, doth look upon as unlawful, and such as are evil and sin unto him if he should perform them; and forbid such things in the worship of God, as he esteems himself obliged in conscience to observe as commands of Christ; if he may practise the things so commanded, and omit the things so forbidden, I fear he will find himself within doors continually at confession, saying with trouble enough; 'I have done those things, which I ought not to have done, and I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and there is no health in me;' unless this author can prove that the commands of God respect only the minds of men, but not their outward actions, which are left unto the authority of the magistrate alone. If no more be here intended, but that whatever conscience may require of any, it will not secure them, but that when they come to act outwardly according to it, the civil magistrate may and will consider their actions, and allow them or forbid them according to his own judgment, it were surely a madness to deny it, as great as to say the sun shineth not at noonday. If conscience to God be confined to thoughts, and opinions, and speculations about the ge-

neral notions, and notices of things, about true and false, and unto a liberty of judging, and determining upon them what they are, whether they are so or no, the whole nature and being of conscience, and that to the reason, sense, and experience of every man, is utterly overthrown. If conscience be allowed to make its judgment of what is good or evil, what is duty or sin, and no obligation be allowed to ensue from thence unto a suitable practice, a wide door is opened unto atheism, and thereby the subversion of all religion and government in the world.

This therefore is the sum of what is asserted in this matter; Conscience, according to that apprehension which it hath of the will of God about his worship (whereunto we confine our discourse), obligeth men to act or forbear accordingly: if their apprehensions are right and true, just and equal, what the Scripture, the great rule of conscience doth declare and require, I hope none upon second thoughts will deny, but that such things are attended with a right unto a liberty to be practised, while the Lord Jesus Christ is esteemed the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and is thought to have power to command the observance of his own institutions. Suppose these apprehensions to be such as may in those things, be they more or less, be judged not to correspond exactly with the great rule of conscience, yet supposing them also to contain nothing inconsistent with, or of a disturbing nature to, civil society and public tranquillity, nothing that gives countenance to any vice or evil, or is opposite to the principal truths and main duties of religion, wherein the minds of men in a nation do coalesce nor carry any politic entanglements along with them; and add thereunto the peaceableness of the persons possessed with those apprehensions, and the impossibility they are under to divest themselves of them, and I say natural right, justice, equity, religion, conscience, God himself in all, and his voice in the hearts of all unprejudiced persons, do require that neither the persons themselves, on the account of their consciences, have violence offered unto them, nor their practices in pursuit of their apprehensions, be restrained by severe prohibitions and penalties. But whereas the magistrate is allowed to judge, and dispose of all outward actions in reference to public tranquillity, if any shall

assert principles, as of conscience, tending or obliging unto the practice of vice, immorality, or sin, or to the disturbance of public society; such principles being all notoriously judged by Scripture, nature, the common consent of mankind, and inconsistent with the fundamental principles of human polity, may be in all instances of their discovery and practice, coerced and restrained. But plainly, as to the commands of conscience, they are of the same extent with the commands of God: if these respect only the inward man, or the mind, conscience doth no more; if they respect outward actions, conscience doth so also.

From the liberty of conscience, a proceed is made to Christian liberty, which is said to be a duty or privilege founded upon the (chimerical) liberty of conscience before granted. But these things stand not in the relation imagined; liberty of conscience is of natural right, Christian liberty is a gospel privilege, though both may be pleaded in unwarrantable impositions on conscience. But these things are so described by our author, as to be confounded. For the Christian liberty described in this paragraph, is either restrained to matters of pure speculation, wherein the mind of man is left entirely free to judge of the truth and falsehood of things; or as it regards things that fall under laws and impositions, wherein men are left entirely free to judge of them, as they are objects of mere opinion. Now how this differs from the liberty of conscience granted before, I know not. And that there is some mistake in this description of Christian liberty, need no other consideration to evince but this; namely, that Christian liberty, as our author tells us, is a privilege, but this is not so, being that which is equally common unto all mankind. This liberty is necessary unto human nature, nor can it be divested of it, and so it is not a privilege that includes a specialty in it. Every man cannot but think what he thinks, and judge what he judgeth, and that when he doth so, whether he will or no; for every thing when it is, and as it is, is necessary. In the use of what means they please, to guide, direct, and determine their thoughts, their liberty doth consist. This is equal in all, and natural unto all. Now this inward freedom of our judgment is, it seems, our Christian liberty, consistent with any impositions upon men in the exercise of the worship of God,

with an obligation on conscience, unto their use and practice; a liberty, indeed, of no value, but a mere aggravation of bondage. And these things are farther discoursed, sect. 3. p. 95. wherein we are told, 'That this prerogative of our Christian liberty, is not so much any new favour granted in the gospel, as the restoration of the mind of man to its natural privilege, by exempting us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, whereby things in themselves indifferent were tied upon the conscience with as indispensable an obligation, as the rule of essential goodness and equity during the whole period of Mosaic dispensation; which being corrected by the gospel, those indifferent things, that have been made necessary by a divine positive command, returned to their own nature to be used, or omitted, only as occasion shall direct.'

It is true, that a good part of our Christian liberty consists in our deliverance from the yoke of Mosaical institutions; but that this 'is not so much a new favour granted in the gospel, as the restoration of the mind of man to its natural privilege,' is an insertion that runs parallel with many others in this discourse. This privilege, as all others of the gospel are, is spiritual, and its outward concerns and exercise are of no value, where the mind is not spiritually made free by Christ. And it is uncertain what is meant by the 'restoration of the mind to its natural privilege.' If the privilege of the mind in its natural purity is intended, as it was before the entrance of sin, it is false; if any privilege, the mind of man in its corrupt depraved condition is capable of, be designed, it is no less untrue. In things of this nature, the mind in that condition is in bondage, and not capable of any liberty; for it is a thing ridiculous, to confound the mere natural liberty of our wills, which is an affection inseparable from that faculty, with a moral or spiritual liberty of mind, relating unto God and his worship. But this whole paragraph runs upon no small mistake; namely, that the yoke of Mosaical institutions consisted in their impositions on the minds and judgments of men, with an opinion of the antecedent necessity of them. For although the words recited, 'things in themselves indifferent, were tied upon the conscience with as indispensable an obligation as the rules of essential goodness and equity,' may

be restrained to their use, exercise, and observation; yet the conclusion of it, that 'whatever our superiors impose upon us, whether in matters of religious worship, or any other duties of morality, there neither is nor can be any intrenchment upon our Christian liberty, provided it be not imposed with an opinion of antecedent necessity of the thing itself,' with the whole scope of the argument insisted on, makes it evident to be the sense intended. But this is wide enough from the mark; the Jews were never obliged to judge the whole system of their legal institutions to be any way necessary, antecedent unto their institution and appointment; nor were they obliged to judge their intrinsic nature changed by their institution; only they knew they were obliged to their constant and indispensable practice, as parts of the worship of God, instituted and commanded by him, who hath the supreme authority over their souls and consciences. There was indeed a bondage frame of spirit upon them in all things, especially in their whole worship of God, as the apostle Paul several times declares. But this is a thing of another nature, though our delivery from it be also a part of Christian liberty. This was no part of their inward, no more than their outward bondage, that they should think, believe, judge, or esteem the things themselves enjoined them, to be absolutely of any other nature than they were. Had they been obliged unto any such judgments of things, they had been obliged to deceive themselves, or to be deceived. But by the absolute authority of God, they were indispensably bound in conscience to the actual observance, and continual use of such a number of ceremonies, carnal ordinances, and outward observances, as being things in themselves low and mean, called by the apostle 'beggarly elements,' and enjoined with so great strictness, and under so severe penalties, many of them, of excision, or extermination from among the people, as became an intolerable, and insupportable yoke unto them. Neither doth the apostle Peter dispute about a judgment of their nature, but the necessity of their observation, when he calls them 'a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear;' Acts xv. 10. And when St. Paul gives a charge to believers, 'to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them

free,' it is with respect to the outward observation of Mosaical rites, as by him instituted, and not as to any inward judgment of their minds concerning their nature, antecedent unto that institution. His whole disputation on that subject, respects only men's practice with regard unto an authoritative obligation thereunto, which he pleaded to be now expired and removed. And if this Christian liberty, which he built and proceeded upon, be of force to free, not our minds from the judgment that they had before of things in themselves, but our persons from the necessary practice and observance of things instituted of God, however antecedently indifferent in themselves; I think it is, at least, of equal efficacy, to exempt us from the necessary practice of things imposed on us in the worship of God, by men. For, setting aside the inequality of the imposing authority, which casts the advantage on the other side (for these legal institutions were imposed on the church by God himself; those now intended are such matters, as our superiors of themselves impose on us in religious worship), the case is absolutely the same; for as God did not give the 'law of commandments contained in ordinances' unto the Jews, from the goodness of things required therein, antecedent to his command, which should make them necessary to be practised by them for their good; but did it of his own sovereign arbitrary will and pleasure; so he obliged not the people themselves unto any other judgment of them, but that they were necessarily to be observed; and setting aside the consideration of his command, they were things in their own nature altogether indifferent; so is it in the present case. It is pleaded that there is no imposition on the minds, consciences, or judgments of men, to think or judge otherwise of what is imposed on them, than as their nature is, and doth require; only they are obliged unto their usage, observance, and practice; which is to put us into a thousand times worse condition than the Jews, if instances of them should be multiplied, as they may lawfully be every year; seeing it much more quiets the mind, to be able to resolve its thoughts immediately into the authority of God under its yoke, than into that of man. If therefore we are freed from the one by our Christian liberty, we are so much more from the other; so

as that 'being made free by Christ,' we should not be the 'servants of men,' in things belonging to his service and worship.

From this discovery here made of the nature of Christian liberty, our author makes some deductions, pp. 98, 99. concerning the nature of religious worship, wherein he tells us, that 'the whole substance of religious worship is transacted within the mind of man, and dwells in the heart and thoughts, the soul being its proper seat and temple, where men may worship their God as they please without offending their prince; and that external worship is no part of religion itself.' I wish he had more clearly and distinctly expressed his mind in this matter: for his assertions, in the sense the words seem to bear, are prodigiously false, and such as will open a door to atheism, with all villany and confusion in the world. For who would not think this to be his intention; Let men keep their minds and inward thoughts and apprehensions right for God, and then they may practise outwardly in religion what they please; one thing one day, another another; be Papists and Protestants, Arians and Homousians; yea, Mahometans and Christians; any thing, every thing, after the manner of the country and laws of the prince where they are and live; the rule that Ecebolius walked by of old? I think there is no man, that owns the Scripture, but will confess that this is, at least, if not a direct, yet an interpretative rejection of the whole authority of God. And may not this rule be quickly extended unto oaths themselves, the bonds and ligaments of human society? For whereas in their own formal nature they belong to the worship of God, why may not men pretend to keep up their reverence unto God, in the internal part of them, or their esteem of him in their invocation of his name, but as to the outward part, accommodate it unto what by their interest is required of them; so swearing with their tongues, but keeping their mind at liberty? If the principles laid down be capable of any other more tolerable sense, and such as may be exclusive of these inferences, I shall gladly admit it; at present what is here deduced from them, seems to be evidently included in them.

It is true, indeed, that natural, moral, or internal worship, consisting in faith, love, fear, thankfulness, submission,

dependence, and the like, hath its constant seat and residence in the souls and minds of men; but that the ways whereby these principles of it are to be outwardly exercised and expressed, by God's command and appointment, are not also indispensably necessary unto us, and parts of his worship, is utterly false. That which principally in the Scripture, comes under the notion of the worship of God, is the due observance of his outward institutions; which divines have, upon unquestionable grounds, contended to be commanded and appointed in general in the second commandment of the Decalogue, whence all particular institutions in the several seasons of the church are educed, and resolved into the authority of God therein expressed. And that account which we have here given us of outward worship, namely, that it is 'no part of religion itself, but only an instrument to express the inward veneration of the mind, by some outward action or posture of the body,' as it is very difficultly to be accommodated unto the sacrifices of old, or the present sacraments of the church, which were, and are parts of outward worship, and, as I take it, of religion; so the being an instrument unto the purpose mentioned, doth not exclude any thing from being also a part of religion and worship itself, if it be commanded by God to be performed in his service, unto his glory. It is pretended that all outward worship is only 'an exterior signification of honour;' but yet all the parts of it in their performance, are acts of obedience unto God, and are the proper actings of faith, love, and submission of soul unto God, which if they are not his worship, and parts of religion, I know not what may be so esteemed. Let then outward worship stand in what relation it will to inward spiritual honour, where God requires it, and commands it, it is no less necessary and indispensably to be performed, than any part of inward worship itself, and is a no less important duty of religion. For any thing comes to be a part of religious worship outwardly to be performed, not from its own nature, but from its respect unto the commands of God; and the end whereunto it is by him designed. So the apostle tells us, 'that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' Rom. x. 10. Confession is but the exterior signification of the faith

that is in our hearts; but yet it is no less necessary to salvation, than faith itself is to righteousness. And those who regulate their obedience and religious worship by the commands of God, knowing that which way ever they are signified, by inbred light, or superadded revelation, it is they which give their obedience its formal nature, making it religious, will not allow that place and use of the outward worship required by God himself, which should exclude it from being religious, or a part of their religion.

But upon the whole matter our author affirms, 'that in all ages of the world, God hath left the management of his outward worship unto the discretion of men, unless when to determine some particulars hath been useful to some other purpose;' p. 100. 'The management of outward worship,' may signify no more but the due performance of it; and so I acknowledge that though it be not left unto men's discretion to observe, or not observe it, yet it is too their duty and obedience, which are their discretion and their wisdom. But the management here understood, is opposed to God's own determination of particular forms, that is, his especial institutions; and hereof I shall make bold to say, that it was never in any age so left to the discretion of men. To prove this assertion, sacrifices are singled out as an instance; it is known and granted, that these were the most solemn part of the outward worship of God for many ages; and that there was a general consent of mankind unto the use of them; so that however the greatest part of the world apostatized from the true, only, and proper object of all religious worship, yet they retained this mode and medium of it. These sacrifices we are told, p. 101. 'did not owe their original unto any divine institution, but were made choice of by good men as a fit way of imitating the grateful resentments of their minds.' The argument alone, as far as I can find, fixed on to firm this assertion is, that those who teach the contrary, and say that this mode of worship was commanded, do say so without proof or evidence. Our author, for the most part, sets off his assertions at no less rate than as such, without whose admittance, all order and government, and almost every thing that is good amongst mankind, would be ruined and destroyed. But he hath the unhappiness to found them ordinarily, not only on principles and

opinions dubious and uncertain; but on such paradoxes, as have been by sober and learned men generally decried. Such is this of the original of sacrifices here insisted on. The divines of the church of Rome, do generally contend that religion and sacrifices are so related, that the one cannot be without the other. Hence they teach God would have required sacrifices in the state of innocency, had mankind continued therein. And though the instance be ill laid, and not proved, yet the general rule applied unto the religion of sinners, is not easily to be evicted. For as in Christian religion we have a sacrifice that is *πρόσφατος καὶ ζῶσα*, as to its efficacy, always 'newly offered and living;' so before the personal offering of it in the body of Christ, there was no season or age, without a due representation of it in sacrifices typical, and of mystical signification. And although there be no express mention in the Scripture of their institution (for these are ancient things), yet there is as good warrant for it, as for offering and burning incense only with sacred fire taken from the altar, which was of a heavenly traduction; for a neglect whereof the priests were consumed with fire before the Lord; that is, though an express command be not recorded for their institution and observation, yet enough may be collected from the Scripture that they were of a divine extract and original. And if they were arbitrary inventions of some men, I desire to have a rational account given me of their catholicism in the world; and one instance more of any thing not natural or divine, that ever prevailed to such an absolute universal acceptance amongst mankind. It is not so safe, I suppose, to assign an arbitrary original unto any thing that hath obtained a universal consent and suffrage; lest men be thought to set their own houses on fire, on purpose to consume their neighbours'.

Besides, no tolerable colour can be given to the assertion, that they were the invention of good men. The first notice we have of them is in those of Cain and Abel, whereof one was a bad man, and of the evil one, and yet must be looked on as the principal inventor of sacrifices, if this fiction be allowed. Some of the ancients indeed thought, that Adam sacrificed the beasts to God, whose skins his first garments were made of: and if so, he was very pregnant and sudden in his invention, if he had no direction from God. But

more than all this, bloody sacrifices were types of Christ from the foundation of the world; and Socinus himself, who, and his followers, are the principal assertors of this paradox, grants that Christ is called the 'Lamb of God,' with respect unto the sacrifices of old, even before the law; as he is termed 'a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' not only with respect unto the efficacy of his sacrifice, but to the typical representation of it. And he that shall deny, that the patriarchs in their sacrifices had respect unto the promised seed, will endeavour the shaking of a pillar of the church's creed. Now I desire to know how men, by their own invention or authority, could assign such an end unto their sacrifices, if they were not of divine prescription, if not designed of God thereunto.

Again; the apostle tells us, 'Abel offered his sacrifice by faith;' Heb. xi. 4. And faith hath respect unto the testimony of God, revealing, commanding, and promising to accept our duty. Wherever any thing is done in faith, there an assent is included to this, 'that God is true;' John iii. 33. And what it doth, is thereby distinguished from will-worship, that is resolved into the commandments and doctrines of men, which whoso rest on, 'make void the commandment of God;' Matt. xv. 3. 6. And the faith of Abel as to its general nature was 'the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for,' Heb. xi. 1. which in this matter it could not be, if it had neither divine command, nor promise to rest upon. It is evident, therefore, that sacrifices were of a divine original; and the instance in them to prove, that the outward worship of God hath in all ages been left unto the prudence and management of men, is feeble, and such as will give no countenance unto what it is produced in the justification of; and herewith the whole discourse of our author on this subject falls to the ground, where I shall at present let it lie, though it might in sundry particulars be easily crumbled into useless asseverations, and some express contradictions.

In the close of this chapter an application is made of what hath been before argued, or rather dictated, upon a particular controversy about significant ceremonies. I am not willing to engage in any contests of that nature; seeing, to the due handling of them, a greater length of discourse would

be necessary than I think meet at present to draw forth this survey unto. Only seeing a very few words may serve to manifest the looseness of what is here discoursed, to that purpose I shall venture on the patience of the reader with an addition of them. We have, therefore, in the first place, a reflection on 'the prodigious impertinency of the clamour against the institution of significant ceremonies, when it is the only use of ceremonies, as all other outward expressions of religion, to be significant.' I do somewhat admire at the temper of this author, who cannot express his dissent from others in controversial points of the meanest and lowest concernment, but with crying out 'prodigies, clamours, impertinencies,' and the like expressions of astonishment in himself, and contempt of others. He might reserve some of these great words for more important occasions. But yet I join with him thus far in what he pleads, that ceremonies instituted in the worship of God that are not significant, are very insignificant, and such as deserve not the least contention about them. He truly also in the next words tells us, that all 'outward worship is a sign of inward honour.' It is so, both in civil things and sacred. All our question is, How these instituted ceremonies come to be significant, and what it is they signify, and whether it be lawful to assign a significancy to them in the worship of God, when indeed they have none of the kind intended? To free us from any danger herein he informs us, p. 108. 'That all the magistrate's power of instituting significant ceremonies, amounts to no more than a power of determining what shall, or what shall not, be visible signs of honour, and this can be no usurpation upon the consciences of men.' This is new language, and such as we have not formerly been used unto in the church of England, namely, that of the 'magistrate's instituting significant ceremonies;' it was of old, the church's appointing ceremonies for decency and order. But all the terms of that assertion are now metamorphosed; the church into the magistrate's; appointing, which respects exercise, into institution, which respects the nature of the thing, and hath a singular use and sense in this matter (or let them pass for the same); and order and decency, into ceremonies significant. These things were indeed implied before, but not so fully and plainly expressed or avowed. But the honour

here intended in this matter is the honour which is given to God in his worship. This is the honour of faith, love, fear, obedience, spiritual and holy in Jesus Christ. To say that the magistrate hath power to institute visible signs of this honour to be observed in the outward worship of God, is upon the matter to say that he hath power to institute new sacraments; for so such things would be; and to say what neither is nor can be proved, nor is here either logically, or any way regularly, attempted so to be.

The comparing of the ceremonies and their signification, with words and their signification, will not relieve our author in this matter. Some things are naturally significant of one another; so effects are of causes; so is smoke of fire; and such were the signs of the weather mentioned by our Saviour, Matt. xvi. 2, 3. Thus I suppose ceremonies are not significant; they do not naturally signify the things whereunto they are applied; for if they did there would be no need of their institution. And they are here said to be instituted by the magistrate. Again, there are customary signs, some it may be catholic, many topical, that have prevailed by custom and usage to signify such things, as they have no absolute natural coherence with, or relation unto; such are putting off the hat in sign of reverence, with others innumerable. And both these sorts of signs may have some use about the service and worship of God as might be manifested in instances. But the signs we inquire after are voluntary, arbitrary, and instituted as our author confesseth; for we do not treat of appointing some ceremonies for order and decency which our canons take notice of, but of instituting ceremonies for signification, such as neither naturally nor merely by custom and usage, come to be significant, but only by virtue of their institution. Now concerning these one rule may be observed; namely, that they cannot be of one kind, and signify things of another, by virtue of any command and consent of men, unless they have an absolute authority both over the sign and thing signified, and can change their natures, or create a new relation between them. To take therefore things natural, that are outward and visible, and appoint them to be signs not natural, nor civil, nor customary, but mystical of things spiritual, supernatural, inward, and invisible, and as such to have them observed in

the church or worship of God, is a thing which is not as yet proved to be lawful; signify thus naturally they never can, seeing there is no natural relation between them; civilly, or by consent they do not so, for they are things sacred which they are supposed to signify, and are so far from signifying by consent, that those who plead for their signification do not agree wherein it doth consist. They must therefore signify so mystically and spiritually, and 'signa, cum ad res divinas pertinent, sunt sacramenta,' says Austin; these things are sacraments. And when men can give mystical and spiritual efficacy to any of their own institutions, when they can make a relation between such signs and the things signified by them, when they can make that teaching and instructing in spiritual things and the worship of God, which he hath not made so, nor appointed, blessed, or consecrated to that end; when they can bind God's promises of assistance and acceptance to their own inventions; when they can advance what they will into the same rank and series of things in the worship of God with the sacrifices of old, or other parts of instituted worship into the church by God's command, and attended with his promise of gracious acceptance; then, and not before, may they institute the significant ceremonies here contended for. Words, it is true, are signs of things, and those of a mixed nature; partly natural, partly by consent. But they are not of one kind, and signify things of another; for, say the schoolmen, 'where words are signs of sacred things, they are signs of them as things, but not as sacred.'

A SURVEY OF THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In the fourth chapter we have no concern; the hypothesis whose confutation he hath undertaken, as it is in itself false, so it is rather suited to promote what he aims at, than what he opposeth; and the principles which himself proceedeth on, do seem to some to border on, if not to be borrowed from his, and those which are here confuted. And thence it is that the foundations which he lays down in the entrance of this discourse, are as destructive of his own pre-

tensions, as of those, against which they are by himself improved. For it is granted, and asserted by him, that there are actions and duties, in and about which the consciences of men are not to be obliged by human authority, but have an antecedent obligation on them from the authority of God himself; 'so that disobedience unto the contrary commands of human authority is no sin, but an indispensable duty.' And although he seems at first to restrain things of this nature unto things natural, and of an essential rectitude; that is, the prime dictates of the law of nature; yet he expressly extends it in instances, unto the belief of the truth of the gospel, which is a matter of mere and pure revelation. And hereon he adds, the formal and adequate reason of this exemption of conscience from human authority, and its obligation unto duty, before its consideration without it and against it, 'which is, not because subjects are in any thing free from the authority of the supreme power on earth, but because they are subject to a superior in heaven, and they are then only excused from the duty of obedience to their sovereign, when they cannot give it without rebellion against God; so that it is not originally any right of their own, that exempts them from a subjection to the sovereign power in all things, but it is purely God's right of governing his own creatures, that magistrates then invade, when they make edicts to violate or control his laws.'

It is about religion and the worship of God that we are discoursing. Now in these things no man ever thought that it was originally a right of subjects, as subjects, abstracting from the consideration of the authority of God, that should exempt them from a subjection to the sovereign power. For though some of the ancients discourse at large, that it is of natural right and equity, that every one should worship God as he would himself, yet they founded this equity in the nature of God, and the authority of his commands. This exemption then ariseth merely, as our author observes, because they are subject to a superior power in heaven, which excuseth them from the duty of obedience to their superiors on earth, when they cannot give it without rebellion against God; whence it undeniably follows, that that supreme power in heaven exempted these things from all inferior powers on earth. Extend this now unto all things

wherein men have, and ought to have, a regard unto that superior power in heaven, as it must be extended, or the whole is ridiculous (for that heavenly supremacy is made the formal reason of the exemption here granted), and all that our author hath been so earnestly contending for in the preceding chapters, falls to the ground. For no man pleads exemption from subjection unto, yea, from giving active obedience unto, the authority and commands of the magistrate, even in things religious, but merely on the account of his subjection to the authority of God in heaven; and, where this is so, he is set at liberty by our author from all contrary commands of men. This is Bellarmine's 'Tutissimum est,' which, as King James observed, overthrows all that he had contended for in his five books, de Justificatione.

A SURVEY OF THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The fifth chapter is at such variance with itself, and what is elsewhere dictated in the treatise, that it would require no small labour, to make any tolerable composition of things between them. This I shall not engage in, as not being of my present concernment. What seems to tend unto the carrying on of the design of the whole, may be called unto some account. In the beginning of it he tells us, that 'a belief of the indifferency or rather imposture of all religions, is made the most effectual, not to say the most fashionable argument for liberty of conscience.' For my part, I never read, I never heard of this pretence or argument, to be used to that purpose. It wants no such defence. Nay, the principle itself, seems to me to be suited directly to oppose and overthrow it. For if there be no such thing in reality as religion in the world, it is certainly a very foolish thing to have differences perpetuated amongst men upon the account of conscience, which without a supposition of religion, is nothing but a vain and empty name. But hence our author takes occasion to discourse of the use of religion and conscience in the government of affairs in the world;

and proves in many words, that 'conscience unto God, with a regard to future eternal rewards or punishments, is the great ligament of human society, the security of government, the strongest bond of laws, and only support of rule, without which every man would first and last be guided by mere self-interest, which would reduce all power and authority to mere force and violence.' To this purpose doth he discourse at large in one section of this chapter; and in another, with no less earnestness and elegancy of words, and repetition of various expressions of the same signification, that the 'use and exercise of conscience, will certainly overthrow all government, and fill the world with confusion.' In like manner, whereas we have been hitherto throughly instructed, as I thought, that men may think what they will in the matters of religion, and be of what persuasion they please, no man can or ought to control them therein; here we are told, that 'no power nor policy can keep men peaceable, until some persuasions are rooted out of their minds by severity of laws and penalties;' p. 145. And whereas heretofore, we were informed, that men 'might believe what they would,' princes were concerned only in their outward practice; now are we assured, that 'above all things, it concerns princes to look to the doctrines and articles of men's belief;' p. 147. But these things, as was before intimated, are not of our concern.

Nor can I find much of that importance, in the third and fourth paragraphs of this declamatory invective. It is evident whom he regards and reflects upon, and with what false, unmanly, unchristian revilings, he endeavours to traduce them. He would have the world believe, that there is a generation of men, whose principles of religion teach them to be proud, peevish, malicious, spiteful, envious, turbulent, boisterous, seditious, and whatever is evil in the world; when others are all for candour, moderation, and ingenuity; amongst whom, no doubt, he reckons himself for one, and gives in this discourse in evidence thereof. But what are these doctrines and articles of men's belief, which dispose them inevitably to all the villanies that our author could find names for? A catalogue of them he gives us, pp. 147, 148. Saith he, 'What if they believe that princes are but the executioners of the decrees of the presbytery; and that in case

of disobedience to their spiritual governors, they may be excommunicated, and by consequence deposed? What if they believe that dominion is founded in grace, and therefore all wicked kings forfeit their crowns, and that it is in the power of the people of God to bestow them where they please? And what if others believe that to pursue their successes in villany and rebellion is to follow providence?' All the world knows what it is that hath given him the advantage of providing a covering for these monstrous fictions; and an account thereof hath been given elsewhere. And what now if those intended do not believe these things, nor any one of them? What if they do openly disavow every one of them, as for aught I ever heard or know they do, and as I do myself? What if some of them are ridiculously framed into articles of faith, from the supposed practices of some individual persons? And what if men be of never so vile opinions about the pursuit of their successes, so they have none to countenance them in any unlawful enterprises, which I think must go before successes? What if only the Papists be concerned in these articles of faith; and they only in one of them about the excommunication and deposition of princes, and that only some of them; and not one of those have any concern in them, whom he intends to reproach? I say, if these things are so, we need look no farther for the principles of that religion, which hath furnished him with all this candour, moderation, and ingenuity, and hath wrought him to such a quiet and peaceable temper, by teaching him that humility, charity, and meekness, which here bewray themselves.

Let it be granted, as it must and ought to be, that all principles of the minds of men, pretended to be from apprehensions of religion, that are in themselves inconsistent with any lawful government, in any place whatever, ought to be coerced and restrained. For our Lord Jesus Christ, sending his gospel to be preached and published in all nations and kingdoms of the world, then, and at all times, under various sorts of governments, all for the same end of public tranquillity and prosperity, did propose nothing in it, but what a submission and obedience unto, might be consistent with the government itself, of what sort soever it were. He came, as they used to sing of old, ' to give men

a heavenly kingdom, and not to deprive them, or take from them their earthly temporal dominions.' There is therefore nothing more certain, than that there is no principle of the religion taught by Jesus Christ, which either in itself, or in the practice of it, is inconsistent with any righteous government on the earth. And if any opinions can truly and really be manifested so to be, I will be no advocate for them, nor their abettors. But such as these, our author shall never be able justly to affix on them whom he opposeth; nor the least umbrage of them; if he do but allow the gospel, and the power of Christ to institute those spiritual ordinances, and requiring their administration, which do not, which cannot extend unto any thing wherein a magistrate, as such, hath the least concernment in point of prejudice. For if on a false or undue practice of them, any thing should be done that is not purely spiritual, or that being done, should be esteemed to operate upon any of the outward concerns, relations, interests, or occasions of men, they may be restrained by the power of him who presides over public good.

But besides these pretences, our author, I know not how, chargeth also the humours, inclinations, and passions of some men, as inconsistent with government, and always disposing men to fanaticism and sedition; and on occasion thereof falls out into an excess of intemperance in reproaching them whom he opposeth; such as we have not above once or twice before met with the like. And in particular he raves about that zeal, as he calls it, for the glory of God, which hath 'turned whole nations into shambles, filled the world with butcheries and massacres, and fleshed itself with slaughters of miriads of mankind.' Now omitting all other controversies, I shall undertake to maintain this against any man in the world, that the effects here so tragically expressed, have been produced by the zeal our author pleads for, in compelling all unto the same sentiments and practices in religion, incomparably above what hath ensued upon any other pretence in or about religion whatever. This, if need require, I shall evince with such instances, from the entering of Christianity into the world to this very day, as will admit of no competition with all those together, which on any account or pretence have produced the like effects. This it was, and is, that hath soaked the earth with blood, depopulated nations, ruined families, coun-

tries, kingdoms, and at length made innumerable Christians rejoice in the yoke of Turkish tyranny, to free themselves from their perpetual persecutions, on the account of their dissent from the worship publicly established in the places of their nativity. And as for the humours, inclinations, and passions of men, when our author will give such rules and directions, as whereby the magistrate may know how to make a true and legal judgment of who are fit on their account, to live in his territories, and who are not, I suppose there will not be any contest about them; until then, we may leave them as here displayed and set up by our author, for every one to cast a cudgel at them that hath a mind thereunto.

For to what purpose is it to consider the frequent occasions he takes, to discourse about the ill tempers and humours of men, or of inveighing against them for being 'morose, and ungentle, unsociable, peevish, censorious,' with many other terms of reproach, that do not at present occur to my memory, nor are doubtless worth the searching after? Suppose he hath the advantage of a better natural temper, have more sedate affections, a more compliant humour, be more remote from giving or receiving provocations, and have learned the ways of courtly deportment, only was pleased to veil them all and every one, in the writing of this discourse; is it meet that they should be persecuted and destroyed, be esteemed seditious and I know not what, because they are of a natural temper not so disposed to affability and sweetness of conversation as some others are? For my part, I dislike the humour and temper of mind characterized by our author, it may be as much as he; I am sure, I think, as much as I ought. But to make it a matter of such huge importance, as solemnly to introduce it into a discourse about religion and public tranquillity, will not it may be, on second thoughts, be esteemed over-considerately done. And it is not unlikely, but that our author seems of as untoward a composition, and peevish a humour to them whom he reflects upon, as they do to him; and that they satisfy themselves as much in their disposition and deportment, as he doth himself in his.

Nimirum idem omnes fallimur; neque est quisquam
Quem non in aliqua re, videre Suffenum
Possis——

Sect. 5. pp. 155, 156. he inveighs against the events that attend the permission of different sects of religion in a commonwealth. And it is not denied, but that some inconveniences may ensue thereon. But as himself hath well observed in another place, we do not in these things inquire what is absolutely best, and what hath no inconvenience attending it; but what is the best which in our present condition we can attain unto; and what in that state answers the duty that God requireth of us. Questionless, it were best that we should be all of one mind in these things of God; and it is no doubt also our duty on all hands to endeavour so to be. But seeing, 'de facto,' this is not so, nor is it in the power of men, when and how they will to depose those persuasions of their minds, and dictates of their consciences, from whence it is not so, on the one part or the other (although in some parts of our differences, some may do so and will not, namely, in things acknowledged to be of no necessity antecedent to their imposition; and some would do so and cannot); it is now inquired, What is the best way to be steered in, for the accomplishment of the desired end of peace and tranquillity for the future; and maintaining love, quietness, and mutual usefulness at present amongst men? Two ways are proposed to this purpose; the one is to exercise mutual forbearance to each other, whilst we are inevitably under the power of different persuasions in these things, producing no practices that are either injurious unto private men in their rights, or hurtful unto the state, as to public peace; endeavouring in the mean time, by the evidence of truth, and a conversation suited unto it, to win upon each other to a consent and agreement in the things wherein we differ. The other is, by severe laws, penalties, outward force, as imprisonments, mulcts, fines, banishments, or capital punishments, to compel all men out of hand, to a uniformity of practice, whatever their judgments be to the contrary. Now as the state of things is amongst us, which of these ways is most suitable to the law of our being and creation, the best principles of the nature of man, and those which have the most evident resemblance of divine perfections, the gospel, the spirit and letter of it, with the mind of its Author our Lord Jesus Christ, which is most conducing to attain the end aimed at, in ways of a natural and genuine compli-

ance with the things themselves of religion, conscience, and divine worship, is left unto the judgment of God, and all good men.

In the mean time, if men will make declamations upon their own surmises, jealousies, and suspicions of things which are either so indeed, that is really surmised, or pretended to be so for some private interests or advantages of their own, which no man can answer or remove; if they may fancy at their pleasure ghosts, goblins, fiends, walking sprights, seditions, drums, trumpets, armies, bears, and tigers; every difference in religion, be it never so small, be the agreement amongst them that differ never so great, be it the visible, known, open interest of them that dissent from what is established to live quietly and peaceably, and to promote the good of the commonwealth wherein they live; do they profess that it is their duty, their principle, their faith and doctrine, to obey constantly their rulers and governors in all things, not contrary to the mind of God, and pretend no such commands of his as should interfere in the least with their power in order to public tranquillity; do they offer all the security of their adherence to such declared principles as mankind is necessitated to be contented and satisfied with, in things of their highest concernment; do they avow an especial sense of the obligation that is put upon them by their rulers, when they are protected in peace; have they no concernment in any such political societies, combinations, interests, as might alone give countenance unto any such disturbance; all is one, every different opinion is press-money, and every sect is an army, although they be all and every one of them Protestants, of whom alone we do discourse. Other answer therefore I shall not return unto this part of our author's arguing, than what he gave of old.

> Ne admittam culpam, ego meo sum pro promus pectori.
> Suspicio est in pectore alieno sita.
> Nam nunc ego te si surripuisse suspicer,
> Jovi coronam de capite e capitolio,
> Quod in culmine astat summo, si non id feceris;
> Atque id tamen mihi lubeat suspicarier;
> Qui tu id prohibere me potes, ne suspicer.

Only, I may add, that sundry of the instances our author makes use of are false, and unduly alleged. For what is here charged on differences in and about religion, in reference unto public tranquillity, might have been, yea, and was

charged on Christian religion for three hundred years, and is so by many still on protestancy, as such; and that it were a very easy and facile task, to set out the pernicious evils of a compelled agreement in the practice of religion, and those not fancied only or feigned, but such as do follow it, have followed it, and will follow it in the world.

An inquiry in this invective, tending to evince its reasonableness is offered in p. 158. namely, 'Where there are divided interests in religion in the same kingdom, it is asked, How shall the prince behave himself towards them?' The answer thereunto is not I confess easy, because it is not easy to be understood what is intended by 'divided interests in religion.' We will therefore lay that aside, and consider what really is amongst us, or may be according to what we understand by these expressions. Suppose, then, that in the same profession of Protestant religion, some different ways and observances in the outward worship of God should be allowed, and the persons concerned herein have no other, cannot be proved to have any other interest, with respect unto religion, but to 'fear God and honour the king;' it is a very easy thing to return an answer to this inquiry. For not entering into the profound political speculation of our author, about 'balancing of parties, or siding with this or that party,' where the differences themselves constitute no distinct parties, in reference to civil government and public tranquillity; let the prince openly avow by the declaration of his judgment, his constant practice, his establishing of legal rights, disposing of public favours in places and preferments, that way of religion which himself owns and approves; and let him indulge and protect others of the same religion, for the substance of it with what himself professeth, in the quiet and peaceable exercise of their consciences in the worship of God, keeping all dissenters within the bounds allotted to them, that none transgress them to the invasion of the rights of others; and he may have both the reality and glory of religion, righteousness, justice, and all other royal virtues which will render him like to him whose vicegerent he is; and will undoubtedly reap the blessed fruits of them, in the industry, peaceableness, and loyalty of all his subjects whatever.

There are sundry things in the close of this chapter ob-

jected against such a course of procedure; but those such as are all of them resolved into a supposition, that they who in any place or part of the world desire liberty of conscience for the worship of God, have indeed no conscience at all. For it is thereon supposed, without farther evidence, that they will thence fall into all wicked and unconscientious practices. I shall make, as I said, no reply to such surmises. Christianity suffered under them for many ages. Protestancy hath done so in sundry places for many years. And those who now may do so, must as they did, bear the effects of them as well as they are able. Only I shall say, first, Whatever is of real inconvenience in this pretension on the supposition of liberty of conscience, is no way removed by taking away all different practices, unless ye could also obliterate all different persuasions out of the minds of men; which although in one place he tells us ought to be done by severe penalties, yet in another he acknowledgeth that the magistrate hath no cognizance of any such things, who yet alone is the inflicter of all penalties. Nay, where different apprehensions are, the absolute prohibition of different answerable practices doth a thousand times more dispose the minds of men to unquietness, than where they are allowed both together, as hath been before declared. And he that can obliterate out of, and take away all different apprehensions and persuasions about the worship of God from the minds and consciences of men, bringing them to centre in the same thoughts and judgments absolutely, in all particulars about them,

> Discendum est——Deus ille fuit, Deus inclyte Memmi
> Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam;——

he is God and not man.

Secondly, It is granted that the magistrate may, and ought to restrain all principles and outward practices that have any natural tendency unto the disturbance of the peace; which being granted, and all obligations upon dissenting parties being alone put upon them by the supreme legislative and executive power of the kingdoms and nations of the world, public tranquillity is and will be as well secured on that respect, as such things are capable of security in this world. All the longsome discourse therefore which here ensues, wherein all the evils that have been in this nation are

charged on liberty of conscience, from whence not one of them did proceed, seeing there was no such thing granted, until upon other civil and political accounts, the floodgates were set open unto the following calamities and confusions, is of no use, nor unto any purpose at all. For until it can be demonstratively proved that those who do actually suffer, and are freely willing so to do (as far as the foregoing otherwise lawful advantages open unto them as well as others may be so called), and resolved to undergo what may farther to their detriment, yea, to their ruin, be inflicted on them, to preserve their consciences entire unto some commands of God, have no respect unto others of as great evidence and light to be his (as are those which concern their obedience unto magistrates, compared with those which they avow about the worship of God); and that private men, uninterested in, and incapable of, any pretence unto public authority of any sort, do always think themselves warranted to do such things as others have done, pleading right and authority for their warranty; and until it be made manifest also, that they have any other or greater interest than to enjoy their particular conditions and estates in peace, and to exercise themselves in the worship of God according as they apprehend his mind to be, these declamations are altogether vain, and as to any solid worth, lighter than a feather.

And I could desire that if these controversies must be farther debated, that our author would omit the pursuit of those things which are really ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος; and according to the ancient custom attended ἄνευ προοιμίων καὶ παθῶν, without rhetorical prefaces, or unreasonable passions, unto the merit of the cause. To this purpose I suppose it might not be amiss for him to consider a few sheets of paper lately published under the title of A Case stated, &c. wherein he will find the main controversy reduced to its proper heads, and a modest provocation unto an answer to what is proposed about it.

——— illum aspice contra
Qui vocat.

A SURVEY OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The sixth chapter in this discourse, which is the last that at the present I shall call to any account (as being now utterly wearied with the frequent occurrence of the same things in various dresses), is designed to the confutation of a principle which is termed the 'foundation of all puritanism,' and that wherein 'the mystery of it' consisteth. Now this is, that 'nothing ought to be established in the worship of God but what is authorized by some precept or example in the word of God, which is the complete and adequate rule of worship.' Be it so, that this principle is by some allowed, yea, contended for. It will not be easy to affix a guilt upon them on the account of its being so; for, lay aside prejudices, corrupt interests, and passions, and I am persuaded that at the first view it will not seem to be foreign unto what is in a hundred places declared and taught in the Scripture. And certainly a man must be master of extraordinary projections who can foresee all the evil, confusion, and desolation in the world which our author hath found out, as inevitable consequences of its admittance. It hath, I confess, been formerly disputed with colourable arguments, pretences, and instances, on the one side and the other, and variously stated amongst learned men, by and on various distinctions, and with divers limitations. But the manner of our author is, that whatever is contrary to his apprehensions must presently overthrow all government, and bring in all confusion into the world. Such huge weight hath he wonted himself to lay on the smallest different conceptions of the minds of men, where his own are not enthroned. Particularly it is contended, that there can be no peace in any churches or states whilst this principle is admitted: when it is easily demonstrable, that without the admittance of it, as to its substance and principal end, all peace and agreement among churches are utterly impossible. The like also may be said of states, which indeed are not at all concerned in it, any farther than as it is a principal means of their peace and security where it is embraced; and that which would reduce rulers to a stability of mind in these things, after they have been tossed up and down with the various suggestions of

men, striving every one to exalt their own imaginations. But seeing it is pretended and granted to be of so much importance, I shall, without much regard to the exclamations of this author, and the reproachful contemptuous expressions which, without stint or measure, he pours out upon the assertors of it, consider both what is the concern of his present adversaries in it, and what is to be thought of the principle itself; so submitting the whole to the judgment of the candid reader. Only I must add one thing to the position, without which it is not maintained by any of those with whom he hath to do, which may deliver him from combating the air in his next assault of it; and this is, That nothing ought to be established in the worship of God as a part of that worship, or made constantly necessary in its observance, without the warranty before mentioned; for this is expressly contended for by them who maintain it, and who reject nothing upon the authority of it, but what they can prove to be a pretended part of religious worship as such. And, as thus laid down, I shall give some farther account both of the principle itself, and of the interest of the nonconformists in it; because both it and they are together here reproached.

What then, I say, is the true sense and importance of that which our author designs to oppose, according to the mind of them who assert it; how impotent his attempts against it are for its removal, shall briefly be declared. In the mean time I cannot but, in the first place, tell him, that if by any means this principle truly stated, as to the expression wherein it is before laid down, and the formal terms whereof it consisteth, should be shaken, or rendered dubious, yet that the way will not be much the plainer, or clearer, for the introduction of his pretensions. There are yet other general maxims, which nonconformists adhere unto, and suppose not justly questionable, which they can firmly stand and build upon in the management of their plea, as to all differences between him and them. And because, it may be, he is unacquainted with them, I shall reckon over some of them for his information. And they are these that follow:

1. That whatever the Scripture hath indeed prescribed, and appointed to be done and observed in the worship of God and the government of the church, that is indeed to be

done and observed. This, they suppose, will not be opposed: at least they do not yet know, notwithstanding any thing spoken or disputed in this discourse, any pretences, on which it may honestly so be. It is also, as I think, secured, Matt. xxviii. 20.

2. That nothing in conjunction with, nothing as an addition or supplement unto what is so appointed, ought to be admitted, if it be contrary either to the general rules, or particular preceptive instructions of the Scripture. And this also, I suppose, will be granted: and if it be not freely, some are ready by arguments to extort the confession of it from them that shall deny it.

3. That nothing ought to be joined with, or added unto, what in the Scripture is prescribed and appointed in these things, without some cogent reason, making such conjunction or addition necessary. Of what necessity may accrue unto the observation of such things, by their prescription, we do not now dispute: but at present only desire to see the necessity of their prescription. And this can be nothing, but some defect in substance or circumstance, matter or manner, kind or form, in the institutions mentioned in the Scripture, as to their proper ends. Now when this is discovered, I will not, for my part, much dispute by whom the supplement is to be made. In the mean time I do judge it reasonable, that there be some previous reasons assigned unto any additional prescriptions in the worship of God unto what is revealed in the Scripture, rendering the matter of those prescriptions antecedently necessary and reasonable.

4. That if any thing or things in this kind shall be found necessary to be added and prescribed, then that and those alone be so, which are most consonant unto the general rules of the Scripture, given us for our guidance in the worship of God, and the nature of those institutions themselves, wherewith they are conjoined, or whereunto they are added. And this also I suppose to be a reasonable request, and such as will be granted by all men who dare not advance their own wills and wisdom above or against the will and wisdom of God.

Now if, as was said, the general principle before mentioned, should by any means be duly removed, or could be so; if entangled or rendered dubious; yet as far as I can

learn, the nonconformists will be very far from supposing the matters in contest between them and their adversaries to be concluded. But as they look upon their concernments to be absolutely secured in the principles now mentioned, all which they know to be true, and hope to be unquestionable; so the truth is, there is by this author very small occasion administered unto any thoughts of quitting the former more general thesis as rightly stated; but rather, if his ability be a competent measure of the merit of his cause, there is a strong confirmation given unto it in the minds of considering men, from the impotency and successlessness of the attempt made upon it. And that this may appear to the indifferent reader's satisfaction, I shall so far divert in this place from the pursuit of my first design, as to state the principle aright, and briefly to call the present opposition of it unto a new account.

The sum, in general, of what this author opposeth with so much clamour is, That divine revelation is the sole rule of divine religious worship; an assertion, that in its latitude of expression, hath been acknowledged in and by all nations and people. The very heathen admitted it of old, as shall be manifested, if need require, by instances sufficient. For though they framed many gods in their foolish darkened imaginations, yet they thought that every one of them would be worshipped according to his own mind, direction, and prescription. So did, and I think do, Christians generally believe: only some have a mind to pare this generally avowed principle, to curb it, and order it so by distinctions and restrictions, that it may serve their turn, and consist with their interest. For an opposition unto it nakedly, directly, and expressly, few have had the confidence yet to make. And the nonconformists need not go one step farther, in the expression of their judgments and principles in this matter. For who shall compel them to take their adversaries' distinctions (which have been invented and used by the most learned of them) of 'substantial and accidental; proper and reductive; primitive and accessary; direct and consequential; intrinsic and circumstantial worship,' and the like; for the most part unintelligible terms in their application into the state of the question? If men have a mind, let them oppose this thesis as laid down; if not, let them let it alone:

and they who shall undertake the confirmation of it, will no doubt carry it through the briers of those unscriptural distinctions. And that this author may be the better instructed in his future work, I shall give him a farther account of the terms of the assertion laid down.

Revelation is either ἐνδιάθετος, or προφορικὸς, and containeth every discovery or declaration that God hath made of himself, or of his mind and will, unto men. Thus it is comprehensive of that concreated light, which is in all men, concerning him and his will. For although we say, that this is natural, and is commonly contradistinguished to revelation properly so called, which for perspicuity sake we call revelation supernatural; yet whereas it doth not so necessarily accompany human nature, but that it may be separated from it; nor is it educed out of our natural faculties by their own native or primogenial virtue, but is or was distinctly implanted in them by God himself, I place it under the general head of revelation. Hence, whatever is certainly from God, by the light of nature and instinct thereof declared so to be, is no less a certain rule of worship and obedience, so far forth as it is from him, and concerneth those things, than any thing that comes from him by express vocal revelation. And this casts out of consideration a vain exception wherewith some men please themselves; as though the men of this opinion denied the admittance of what is from God, and by the light of nature discovered to be his mind and will. Let them once prove any thing in contest between them and their adversaries to be required, prescribed, exacted, or made necessary by the light of nature, as the will of God revealed therein, and I will assure them, that as to my concern, there shall be an end to all difference about it. But yet, that I may add a little farther light into the sense of the nonconformists in this matter, I say,

1. That this inbred light of reason guides unto nothing at all in or about the worship of God, but what is more fully, clearly, and directly taught and declared in the Scripture. And this may easily be evinced, as from the untoward mixture of darkness and corruption that is befallen our primogenial inbred principles of light and wisdom, by the entrance of sin; so also from the end of the Scripture itself; which was to restore that knowledge of God and his mind, which was

lost by sin; and which might be as useful to man in his lapsed condition, as the other was in his pure and uncorrupted estate. At present, therefore, I shall leave this assertion, in expectation of some instance, in matters great or small, to the contrary, before I suppose it be obnoxious to question or dispute.

2. As there can be no opposition nor contradiction between the light of nature and inspired vocal or Scriptural revelation, because they are both from God; so if in any instance there should appear any such thing unto us, neither faith nor reason can rest in that which is pretended to be natural light, but must betake themselves for their resolution unto express revelation. And the reason hereof is evident; because nothing is natural light, but what is common to all men; and where it is denied, it is frustrated as to its ruling efficacy. Again, it is mixed, as we said before; and it is not every man's work to separate the chaff from the wheat, or what God hath implanted in the mind of man when he made him upright, and what is since soaked into the principles of his nature, from his own inventions. But this case may possibly very rarely fall out, and so shall not much be insisted on.

3. Our inquiry in our present contest is solely about instituted worship, which we believe to depend on supernatural revelation: the light of nature can no way relieve or guide us in it or about it, because it refers universally to things above and beyond that light; but only with reference unto those moral, natural circumstances, which appertain unto those actings or actions of men whereby it is performed, which we willingly submit unto its guidance and direction.

Again, vocal revelation hath come under two considerations: First, As it was occasional. Secondly, As it became stated.

First, As it was occasional. For a long time God was pleased to guide his church in many concerns of his worship, by fresh occasional revelations; even from the giving of the first promise unto Adam, unto the solemn giving of the law by Moses. For although men had in process of time many stated revelations, that were preserved by tradition among them, as the first promise, the institution of sacrifices, and the like; yet as to sundry emergencies of

his worship, and parts of it, God guided them by new occasional revelations. Now those revelations being not recorded in the Scripture, as being only for present or emergent use, we have no way to know them, but by what those, to whom God was pleased so to reveal himself, did practise; and which, on good testimony, found acceptance with him. Whatever they so did, they had especial warranty from God for; which is the case of the great institution of sacrifices itself. It is a sufficient argument that they were divinely instituted, because they were graciously accepted.

Secondly, Vocal revelation, as the rule of worship, became stated and invariable, in and by the giving and writing of the law. From thence, with the allowances before mentioned, we confine it to the Scripture, and so unto all succeeding generations. I confess many of our company, who kept to us hitherto in granting divine revelation to be the sole principle and rule of religious worship, now leave us, and betake themselves to paths of their own. The postmisnical Jews, after many attempts made that way by their predecessors, both before and after the conversation of our Lord Christ in the flesh, at length took up a resolution, that all obligatory divine revelation was not contained in the Scripture, but was partly preserved by oral tradition. For, although they added a multitude of observances unto what were prescribed unto their fathers by Moses, yet they would never plainly forego that principle, nor do to this day, that divine revelation is the rule of divine worship. Wherefore, to secure their principle and practice, and to reconcile them together (which are indeed at an unspeakable variance), they have fancied their oral law; which they assert to be of no less certain and divine original than the law that is written. On this pretence they plead, that they keep themselves unto the forementioned principle, under the superstition of a multitude of self-invented observances. The Papists also here leave us; but still with a semblance of adhering to that principle, which carries so great and uncontrollable an evidence with it, as that there are a very few, as was said, who have hitherto risen up in a direct and open opposition unto it. For whereas they have advanced a double principle for the rule of religious worship besides the Scripture; namely, tradition, and the present determi-

nations of their church, from thence educed; they assert the first to be divine or apostolical, which is all one; and the latter to be accompanied with infallibility, which is the formal reason of our adherence and submission unto divine revelations. So that they still adhere in general unto the forementioned principle, however they have debauched it by their advancement of those other guides. But herein also, we must do them right, that they do not absolutely turn loose those two rude creatures of their own, traditions and present church determinations, upon the whole face of religion, to act therein at their pleasure; but they secure them from whatever is determined in the written word, affirming them to take place only in those things that are not contrary to the word, or not condemned in it; for in such, they confess, they ought not, nor can take place. Which I doubt whether our author will allow of or no, in reference to the power by him asserted.

By religious worship, in the thesis above, we understand, as was said before, instituted worship only, and not that which is purely moral and natural; which, in many instances of it, hath a great coincidence with the light of nature, as was before discoursed.

We understand also the solemn or stated worship of the church of God. That worship, I say, which is solemn and stated for the church, the whole church, at all times and seasons, according to the rules of his appointment, is that which we inquire after. Hence in this matter we have no concernment in the fact of this or that particular person, which might be occasionally influenced by necessity, as David's eating of the shewbread was; and which, how far it may excuse or justify the persons that act thereon, or regulate their actions directly, I know not, nor am any way engaged to inquire.

This is the state of our question in hand, the mind of the assertion, which is here so hideously disguised, and represented in its pretended consequences. Neither do I think there is any thing needful farther to be added unto it; but yet for the clearing of it from mistakes, something may be discoursed which relates unto it. We say then;

First, That there are sundry things to be used in, about, and with those actions, whereby the worship of God is per-

formed, which yet are not sacred, nor do belong unto the worship of God as such; though that worship cannot be performed without them. The very breath that men breathe, and the light whereby they see, are necessary to them in the worship of God, and yet are not made sacred or religious thereby. Constantine said of old, that he was 'a bishop, but without the church:' not a sacred officer, but one that took care, and had a supervisorship of things necessarily belonging to the performance of God's worship, yet no parts or adjuncts of it as such. For it was all still without. Now all those things in or about the worship of God, that belonged unto Constantine's episcopacy, that is the ordering and disposal of things without the church, but about it; without worship, but about it; we acknowledge to be left unto common prudence, guided by the general rules of Scripture, by which the church is to walk and compose its actings. And this wholly supersedes the discourse of our author concerning the great variety of circumstances wherewith all human actions are attended. For in one word, all such circumstances as necessarily attend human actions as such, neither are sacred, nor can be made so without an express institution of God, and are disposable by human authority. So that the long contest of our author on that head is altogether vain. So, then,

Secondly, By all the concernments of religious worship, which any affirm, that they must be directed by divine revelation, or regulated by the Scripture; they intend all that is religious, or whatever belongs to the worship of God, as it is divine worship: and not what belongs unto the actions wherein and whereby it is performed, as they are actions.

Thirdly, That when any part of worship is instituted in special, and general rules are given for the practice of it, 'hic et nunc:' there the warranty is sufficient for its practice at its due seasons; and for those seasons, the nature of the thing itself, with what it hath respect unto, and the light of the general Scripture rules, will give them an acceptable determination.

And these few observations will abundantly manifest the impertinency of those who think it incumbent on any, by virtue of the principle before laid down, to produce express warranty in words of Scripture, for every circumstance

that doth attend and belong unto the actions whereby the worship of God is performed, which as they require not, so no such thing is included in the principle as duly stated. For particular circumstances that have respect to good order, decency, and external regulation of divine worship, they are all of them either circumstances of the actions themselves, whereby divine worship is performed and exercised, and so in general they are natural and necessary; which in particular, or 'actu exercito,' depend on moral prudence; or religious rites themselves, added in and to the whole, or any parts of divine service, which alone in this question come under inquiry.

I know there are usually sundry exceptions put into this thesis, as before stated and asserted; and instances to the contrary are pretended, some whereof are touched upon by our author, p. 181. which are not now particularly and at large to be considered. But yet because I am, beyond expectation, engaged in the explication of this principle, I shall set it so far forth right and straight unto further examination, as to give in such general observations as, being consistent with it, and explanatory of it, will serve to obviate the most of the exceptions that are laid against it. As,

1. Wherever in the Scripture we meet with any religious duty that had a preceding institution, although we find not expressly a consequent approbation, we take it for granted that it was approved; and so on the contrary, where an approbation appears, an institution is concealed.

2. The question being only about religious duties, or things pertaining to, or required in or about the worship of God, no exception against the general thesis can take place, but such as consists in things directly of that nature. Instances in and about things civil and belonging merely to human conversation, or things natural, as signs and memorials one of another, are in this matter of no consideration.

3. Things extraordinary in their performance, and which, for aught we know, may have been so in their warranty or rule, have no place in our debate. For we are inquiring only after such things as may warrant a suitable practice in us without any farther authority, which is the end for which instances against this principle are produced; this actions extraordinary will not do.

4. Singular and occasional actions, which may be variously influenced and regulated by present circumstances, are no rule to guide the ordinary stated worship of the church. David's eating of the shew-bread, wherein he was justified because of his hunger and necessity, was not to be drawn into example of giving the shew-bread promiscuously to the people. And sundry instances to the same purpose are given by our Saviour himself.

5. There is nothing of any dangerous or bad consequence in this whole controversy, but what lies in the imposition on men's practices of the observation of uncommanded rites, making them necessary unto them in their observation. The things themselves are said, in their own nature, antecedent to their injunction for practice, to be indifferent, and indifferent as unto practice. What hurt would it be to leave them so? They cannot, say some, be omitted for such and such reasons. Are there then reasons for their observation besides their injunction, and such as on the account whereof they are enjoined? Then are they indeed necessary in some degree before their injunction. For all reason for them must be taken from themselves. And things wholly indifferent have nothing in themselves, one more than another, why one should be taken, and another left. For if one have the advantage of another in the reasons for its practice, it is no more indifferent; at least it is not comparatively so. Granting, therefore, things enjoined to be antecedently to their injunction, equally indifferent in their own nature, with all other things of the same or the like kind, which yet are rejected or not enjoined; and then to give reasons taken from themselves, their decency, their conducingness to edification, their tendency to the increase of devotion, their significancy of this or that, is to speak daggers and contradictions; and to say a thing is indifferent before the injunction of its practice; but yet if we had thought so, we would never have enjoined it; seeing we do so upon reasons. And without doubt this making necessary the practice of things in the worship of God, proclaimed to be indifferent in themselves, and no way called for by any antecedent reason, is an act of power.

6. Where things are instituted of God, and he himself makes an alteration in or of his own institutions, those in

stitutions may be lawfully practised and observed, until the mind of God for their alteration and abolition be sufficiently revealed, proposed, and confirmed unto them that are concerned in them. For as the making of a law doth not oblige, until and without the promulgation of it, so as that any should offend in not yielding obedience unto it; so upon the abrogation of a law, obedience may be conscientiously and without sin yielded unto that law, until the abrogation, by what act soever it was made, be notified and confirmed. An instance hereof we have in the observation of Mosaical rites, in the forbearance of God, after the law of their institution was enervated, and the obligation of it unto obedience really dissolved, at least the foundation of it laid; for the actual dissolution of it depended on the declaration of the fact, wherein it was founded.

7. There may be a coincidence of things performed by sundry persons, at the same time and in the same place; whereof some may have respect unto religious worship directly, and so belong unto it; and others only occasionally, and so not at all belong thereunto. As if when the Athenians had been worshipping of their altars, St. Paul had come, and reading the inscription of one of them, and thence taking occasion and advantage to preach 'the unknown God' unto them; their act was a part of religious veneration, his presence and observation of them, and laying hold of that occasion for his own purpose, was not so.

8. Many things, which are mere natural circumstances, requisite unto the performance of all actions in communities whatever, and so to be ordered by prudence according unto general rules of the word of God, may seem to be adjuncts of worship, unless they are followed to their original, which will discover them to be of another nature.

9. Civil usages and customs observed in a religious manner, as they are all to be by them that believe, and directed by them unto moral ends, may have a show and appearance of religious worship; and so, according to the principle before stated, require express institution. But although they belong unto our living unto God in general; as do all things that we do, seeing 'whether we eat or drink, we are to do all to the glory of God;' and therefore are to be done in faith; yet they are or may be no part of instituted worship, but

such actions of life as in our whole course, we are to regulate by the rules of the Scripture, so far as they afford us guidance therein.

10. Many observances in and about the worship of God are recorded in the Scripture, without especial reflecting any blame or crime on them by whom they were performed (as many great sins are historically only related, and left to be judged by the rule of the word in other places, without the least remark of displeasure on the persons guilty of them), and that by such whose persons were accepted of God; yea, it may be in that very service, wherein less or more they failed in their observation; God being merciful to them, though not in all things prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, and yet the things themselves not to be approved nor justified, but condemned of God. Such was the fact of Judas Maccabeus in his offering sacrifices for the sin of them that were dead; and that of instituting an anniversary feast in commemoration of the dedication of the altar.

This little search have I made into this great mystery, as it is called, of puritanism, after which so mighty an outcry is raised by this author; and if it might be here farther pursued, it would, as stated by us in these general rules and explications, be fully manifested to be a principle in general admitted, until of late, by all sorts of men: some few only having been forced sometimes to corrupt it, for the security of some especial interest of their own. And it were an easy thing to confirm this assertion by the testimonies of the most learned Protestant writers, that have served the church in the last ages. But I know how with many amongst us they are regarded; and that the citation of some of the most reverend names among them, is not unlikely to prejudice and disadvantage the cause wherein their witness is produced. I shall not therefore expose them to the contempt of those, now they are dead, who would have been unwilling to have entered the lists with them in any kind of learning, when they were alive. There is, in my apprehension, the substance of this assertion still retained among the Papists. Bellarmine himself lays it down as the foundation of all his controversies; and endeavours to prove, 'Propheticos et apostolicos libros verum esse verbum Dei,

et certam et stabilem regulam fidei;' de Verbo Dei. lib. 1. cap. 1. 'That the prophetical and apostolical books are the true word of God, a certain and stable rule of faith,' will go a great way in this matter. For all our obedience in the worship of God, is the obedience of faith; and if the Scripture be the rule of faith, our faith is not in any of its concerns to be extended beyond it, no more than the thing regulated is to be beyond the rule.

Neither is this opinion of so late a date as our author and others would persuade their credulous followers. The full sense of it was spoken out roundly of old. So speaks the great Constantine (that an emperor may lead the way) in his oration to the renowned fathers assembled at Nice. *Εὐαγγελικαὶ βίβλοι καὶ ἀποστολικαὶ, καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν προφητῶν θεσπίσματα σαφῶς ἡμᾶς ἃ χρὴ περὶ τοῦ θείου φρονεῖν ἐκπαιδεύουσι; τὴν πολεμοποιὸν οὖν ἀπελάσαντες ἔριν, ἐκ τῶν θεοπνεύστων λόγων λάβωμεν τῶν ζητουμένων τὴν λύσιν.* i. e. 'The evangelical and apostolical books, and the oracles of the ancient prophets, do plainly instruct us, what we are to think of divine things. Laying aside therefore all hostile discord, let us resolve the things brought into question, by the testimonies of the writings given by divine inspiration.' We have here the full substance of what is pleaded for; and might the advice of this noble emperor be admitted, we should have a readier way to expedite all our present differences, than as yet seems to be provided for us. The great Basil speaks yet more expressly than Constantine the Great, lib. de Confes. Fid. *Φανερὰ ἔκπτωσις, καὶ ὑπερηφανίας κατηγωρία, ἢ ἀθετεῖν τι τῶν γεγραμένων, ἢ ἐπεισάγειν τῶν μὴ γεγραμμένων.* i. e. 'It hath the manifest guilt of infidelity and pride, to reject any thing that is written, or to add or introduce any thing that is not written;' which is the sum of all that in this matter is contended for. To the same purpose he discourseth, epist. 80. ad Eustath: where moreover he rejects all pretences of customs and usages of any sorts of men, and will have all differences to be brought for their determination to the Scripture. Chrysostom, in his Homily on Psalm xcv. speaks the same sense: saith he; *καὶ τίς ὁ ταῦτα ἐγγυώμενος; Παῦλος. οὐδὲν γὰρ δεῖ λέγειν ἀμάρτυρον, οὐδὲ ἀπὸ λογισμῶν μόνον. ἐάν τι γὰρ ἄγραφον λέγηταῖ, ἡ διάνοια τῶν ἀκροατῶν σκάζει, πῇ μὲν ἐπινεύουσα, πῇ δὲ*

παραγραφομένη, καὶ ποτὲ μὲν τὸν λόγον ὡς ἴωλον ἀποστρεφομένη, ποτὲ δὲ ὡς πιθανὸν παραδεχομένη. ὅταν δὲ ἔγγραφος ἡ μαρτυρία τῆς θείας φωνῆς προέλθη, καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος τὸν λόγον, καὶ τοῦ ἀκούοντος τὴν διάνοιαν ἐβεβαίωσε. 'Who is it that promiseth these things? Paul. For we are not to say any thing without testimony, nor upon our mere reasonings. For if any thing be spoken without Scripture (testimony), the mind of the hearers fluctuates, now assenting, anon hesitating, sometimes rejecting what is spoken as frivolous, sometimes receiving it as probable. But where the testimonies of the divine voice comes forth from the Scripture, it confirmeth the word of the speaker, and the mind of the hearer.' It is even so; whilst things relating to religion and the worship of God are debated and disputed by the reasonings of men, or on any other principles besides the express authority of the Scriptures, no certainty or full persuasion of mind can be attained about them. Men under such actings are as Lucian, in his Menippus, says he was between the disputations of the philosophers; sometimes he nodded one way, sometimes another, and seemed to give his assent backwards and forwards to express contradictions. It is in the testimony of the Scripture alone, about the things of God, that the consciences of those that fear him can acquiesce and find satisfaction. The same author, as in many other places, so in his 13th Homily on the 2 Epist. to the Corinth. expressly sends us to the Scripture to inquire after all things, as that which is the exact canon, balance, and rule of religion. Παρὰ τῶν γραφῶν ταῦτα πάντα πυνθάνεσθε. Among the Latins Tertullian is express to the same purpose. In his book against Hermogenes, 'Adoro,' said he 'plenitudinem Scripturarum quæ mihi factorem manifestat et facta.' Again, 'Scriptum esse hoc doceat Hermogenis officina, aut timeat, iræ illud, adjicientibus, aut detrahentibus destinatum.' 'I adore the fulness of the Scripture;—and let Hermogenes prove what he saith, to be written, or fear the woe denounced against them, who add to, or take from, the word.' And again, in his book, de Carne Christi; 'Non recipio quod extra Scripturum de tuo infers.' 'I do not receive what you bring of your own without Scripture.' So also in his book, de Præscriptionibus: 'Nobis nihil ex nostro arbitrio indulgere licet; sed nec eligere quod aliquis de arbitrio suo induxerit. Apostolos domini

habemus authores, qui nec ipsi quicquam ex suo arbitrio quod inducerent elegerunt, sed acceptam a Christo disciplinam, fideliter nationibus assignaverunt.' 'It is not lawful for us' (in these things) 'to indulge unto our own choice; nor to choose what any one brings in of his choosing. We have the apostles of our Lord for our example, who brought in nothing of their own minds or choice; but having received the discipline' (of Christian religion) 'from Christ, they faithfully communicated it to the nations.' Jerome is plain to the same purpose in sundry places. So Comment. in 23 Matth. 'Quod de Scripturis authoritatem non habet, eadem facilitate contemnitur, qua probatur.' 'That which hath not authority from the Scripture, is as easily despised as asserted.' Comm. in Hagg. cap. 1. 'Sed et alia quæ absque authoritate et testimoniis Scripturarum, quasi traditione apostolica sponte reperiunt atque confingunt, percutit gladius Dei.' 'But those other things which without authority or testimony of the Scriptures, they find out or feign of their own accord, as of apostolical tradition; the sword of God smites through.' It were easy to produce twenty other testimonies out of the ancient writers of the church, giving sufficient countenance to the assertion contended about. What account our author gives of this principle is now, very briefly, to be considered.

First, therefore, pp. 174, 175. he reviles it as 'a pretence wild and humoursome, which men must be absurd if they believe, or impudent if they do not; seeing it hath not the least shadow or foundation either from Scripture or reason:' though it be expressly asserted either in its own terms, or confirmed by direct deductions, in and from above forty places of Scripture. And so much for that part of the assault.

The next chargeth it with infinite follies and mischiefs in those which allow it. And it is said that 'there can never be an end of alterations and disturbances in the church whilst it is maintained.' The contrary whereof is true, confirmed by experience and evidence of the thing itself. The admittance of it would put an end to all disturbances. For let any man judge whether, if there be matters in difference, as in all these things there are and ever were, the bringing them to an issue and settled stability, be not likelier to be

effected by all men's consenting unto one common rule, whereby they may be tried and examined, than that every party should be left at liberty to indulge to their own affections and imaginations about them. And yet we are told, p. 178. 'that all the pious villanies that ever have disturbed the Christian world, have sheltered themselves in this grand maxim, that Jesus Christ is the only law-maker to his church.' I confess, I could heartily desire that such expressions might be forborne. For, let what pretence men please to be given to them, and colour put upon them, they are full of scandal to the Christian religion. The maxim itself here traduced, is as true as any part of the gospel. And it cannot be pretended that it is not the maxim itself, but the abuse of it (as all the principles of the gospel, through the blindness and lusts of men, have been abused), that is reflected on: seeing the design of the whole discourse is to evert the maxim itself. Now whatever apprehensions our author may have of his own abilities, I am satisfied that they are no way competent to disprove this principle of the gospel; as will be evident on the first attempt he shall make to that purpose; let him begin the trial as soon as he pleaseth.

In the third section we have a heap of instances raked together to confront the principle in its proper sense before declared and vindicated, in no one whereof it is at all concerned. For the reasons of things in matters civil and religious, are not the same. All political government in the world consists in the exercise of principles of natural right, and their just application to times, ages, people, occasions, and occurrences. Whilst this is done government is acted regularly to its proper end: where this is missed, it fails. These things God hath left unto the prudence of men and their consent; wherein they cannot for the most part fail, unless they are absolutely given up unto unbridled lusts; and the things wherein they may fail are always convenient or inconvenient, good and useful, or hurtful and destructive; not always, yea, very seldom, directly and in themselves morally good or evil. In such things men's ease and profit, not their consciences, are concerned. In the worship of God things are quite otherwise. It is not convenience or inconvenience, advantage or disadvantage, as to the things of this

life, but merely good or evil, in reference to the pleasing of God, and to eternity, that is in question. Particular applications to the manners, customs, usages of places, times, countries, which is the proper field of human authority, liberty, and prudence in civil things (because their due, useful, and regular administration depends upon them); have here no place. For the things of the worship of God being spiritual, are capable of no variations from temporal earthly varieties among men; have no respect to climates, customs, forms of civil government, or any thing of that nature. But considering men quite under other notions, namely, of sinners and believers; with respect utterly unto other ends, namely, their living spiritually unto God here, and the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter, are not subject to such prudential accommodations or applications. The worship of God is, or ought to be, the same at all times, in all places, and amongst all people, in all nations; and the order of it is fixed and determined in all particulars that belong unto it. And let not men pretend the contrary, until they can give an instance of any such defect in the institutions of Christ, as that the worship of God cannot be carried on, nor his church ruled and edified, without an addition of something of their own for the supply thereof; which therefore should and would be necessary to that end antecedent unto its addition; and when they have so done, I will subscribe unto whatsoever they shall be pleased to add of that, or indeed any other kind. 'Customs of churches,' and 'rules of decency,' which our author here casts under the magistrate's power, are ambiguous terms, and in no sense express the hypothesis he hath undertaken the defence of. In the proper signification of the words, the things intended may fall under those natural circumstances, wherein religious actions in the worship of the church may have their concern, as they are actions, and are disposable by human authority. But he will not, I presume, so soon desert his fundamental principle, of the magistrate's appointing things in, and parts of, religious worship, nowhere described or determined in the word of God; which alone we have undertaken to oppose. The instances he also gives us about actions, in their own nature and use indifferent; as going to law, or taking physic; are not, in the least, to his purpose. And yet if I

should say, that none of these actions are indeed indifferent in 'actu exercito,' as they speak, and in their individual performance, but have a moral good or evil, as an inseparable adjunct, attending them, arising out of respect to some rule, general or particular, of divine revelation, I know he cannot disprove it; and much more is not pleaded concerning religious worship.

But this principle is farther charged with mischief equal to its folly, which is proved by instances in sundry uninstituted observances, both in the Jewish and primitive Christian churches; as also in Protestant churches abroad. I answer, that if this author will consent to umpire these differences by either the Old or New Testament, or by any Protestant church in the world, we shall be nearer an end of them, than, as far as I can see, yet otherwise we are. If he will not be bound, neither to the example of the church of the Jews, nor of the churches of the New Testament, nor of the present Protestant churches, it must be confessed that their names are here made use of only for a pretence and an advantage. Under the Old Testament we find, that all that God required of his church, was, that they should observe 'the law of Moses his servant, which he commanded to him in Horeb, for all Israel, with his statutes and judgments;' Mal. iv. 4. And when God had given out his institutions, and the whole order of his worship, it being fixed in the church accordingly; it is added eight or ten times in one chapter, that this was done, 'as the Lord commanded Moses, even so did he;' Exod. xl. After this God gives them many strict prohibitions, from adding any thing to what he had so commanded; as Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Prov. xxx. 6. And as he had in the Decalogue rejected any worship not of his own appointment, as such, Exod. xx. 4, 5. so he made it afterward the rule of his acceptation ofthat people and what they did, or his refusal of them and it, whether it was by him commanded or no. So in particular, he expressly rejects that which was so added, as to days, and times, and places, though of the nearest affinity and cognation to what was appointed by himself, because it was invented by man; yea, by a king; 1 Kings xii. 33. And when in process of time, many things of an uncertain original were crept into the observance of the church, and had firmed themselves with the notion of tra-

ditions; they were all at once rejected in that word of the blessed Holy One; 'in vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines' (that is, what is in my worship to be observed) 'the traditions of men.' For the churches of the New Testament, the foundation of them is laid in that command of our Saviour, Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Go and teach all nations; teaching them to observe and do all whatsoever I command you: and lo, I am with you to the end of the world.' That they should be taught to do or observe any thing but what he commanded; that his presence should accompany them in the teaching or observation of any superadditions of their own; we nowhere find written, intimated, or exemplified by any practice of theirs. Nor, however, in that juncture of time, the like whereunto did never occur before, nor ever shall do again, during the expiration and taking down of Mosaical institutions, before they became absolutely unlawful to be observed, the apostles, according to the liberty given them by our Lord Jesus Christ, and direction of the Holy Ghost, did practise some things compliant with both church-states, did they, in any one instance, impose any thing on the practice of the churches in the worship of God, to be necessarily and for a continuance observed among them, but what they had express warrant and authority, and command of our Lord Christ for. Counsel they gave in particular cases, that depended upon present emergencies; directions for the regular and due observation of institutions, and the application of general rules in particular practice: they also taught a due and sanctified use of civil customs, and the proper use of moral or natural symbols. But to impose any religious rites on the constant practice of the church in the worship of God, making them necessary to be always observed by that imposition, they did not once attempt to do, or assume power for it to themselves. Yea, when upon an important difficulty, and to prevent a ruining scandal, they were enforced to declare their judgment to the churches in some points, wherein they were to abridge the practice of their Christian liberty for a season; they would do it only in things made necessary by the state of things then among the churches (in reference to the great end of edification, whereby all practices are to be regulated), before the declaration of their judgment, for the restriction mentioned,

Acts xv. So remote were they from assuming unto themselves a dominion over the religion, consciences, or faith of the disciples of Christ; or requiring any thing in the constant worship of the church, but what was according to the will, appointment, and command of their Lord and Master. Little countenance therefore is our author like to obtain unto his sentiments, from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; or the example either of the Jews or Christians mentioned in them.

The instances he gives from the church of the Jews, or that may be given, are either civil observances, as the feast of Purim; or moral conveniencies directed by general rules, as the building of synagogues; or customary signs suited to the nature of things, as wearing of sackcloth; or such as have no proof of their being approved, as the feast of dedication, and some monthly fasts taken up in the captivity; from none of which any objection can be taken against the position before laid down. Those from the church of the New Testament had either a perpetual binding institution from the authority of Christ, as the Lord's day sabbath; or contain only a direction to use civil customs and observances in a holy and sanctified manner, as the love feasts and kiss of charity; or such as were never heard of in the New Testament at all, as the observation of Lent and Easter. He that out of these instances can draw a warranty for the power of the civil magistrate over religion and the consciences of men, to institute new duties in religion when he pleaseth, so these do 'not countenance vice, nor disgrace the Deity;' which all his Christian subjects shall be bound in conscience to observe; or otherwise make good any of those particular conclusions, that therefore Christ is not the only lawgiver to his church; or that divine revelation is not the adequate rule of divine worship; or that men may add any thing to the worship of God, to be observed in it, constantly and indispensably, by the whole church; will manifest himself to have an excellency in argumentation, beyond what I have ever yet met withal.

A removal of the argument taken from the perfection of the Scripture, and its sufficiency to instruct us in the whole counsel and will of God, concerning his worship and our obedience unto him, is nextly attempted: but with no

engines, but what have been discovered to be insufficient to that purpose a hundred times. It is alleged, 'That what the Scripture commands in the worship of God, is to be observed; that what it forbids, is to be avoided.' Which if really acknowledged, and a concernment of the consciences of men be granted therein, is sufficiently destructive of the principal design of our author. But moreover, I say, that it commands and forbids things by general rules, as well as by particular precepts and inhibitions; and that, if what is so commanded be observed, and what is so forbidden be avoided, there is a direct rule remaining in it for the whole worship of God.

But this is said here to be of 'substantial duties, but not of external circumstances;' and if it be so even of substantial duties, it perfectly overthrows all that our author hath been pleading in the three first chapters of his discourse. For external circumstances; of what nature those are which are disposable by human authority and prudence, hath been now often declared, and needs not here to be repeated.

The sum of his apprehensions in this matter, about the perfection and sufficiency of the Scripture in reference to the worship of God, our author gives us, p. 189. 'Any thing,' saith he, 'is lawful' (that is, in the worship of God) 'that is not made unlawful by some prohibition: for things become evil, not upon the score of their being not commanded; but upon that of their being forbidden. And what the Scripture forbids not, it allows; and what it allows, is not unlawful; and what is not unlawful, may lawfully be done.' This tale, I confess, we have been told many and many a time; but it hath been as often answered, that the whole of it, as to any thing of reasoning, is captious and sophistical.

Once more, therefore; what is commanded in the worship of God is lawful, yea, is our duty to observe. All particular instances of this sort, that are to have actual place in the worship of God, were easily enumerated, and so expressly commanded. And why among sundry things that might equally belong thereunto one should be commanded, and another left at liberty without any institution, no man can divine. Of particular things not to be observed there is not the same reason. It is morally impossible, that all instances of men's inventions, all that they can find out to

introduce into the worship of God, at any time, in any age, and please themselves therein, should be beforehand enumerated, and prohibited in their particular instances. And if because they are not so forbidden, they may lawfully be introduced into divine worship, and imposed upon the practices of men; ten thousand things may be made lawful, and be so imposed. But the truth is, although a particular prohibition be needful to render a thing evil in itself, a general prohibition is enough to render any thing unlawful in the worship of God. So we grant, that what is not forbidden is lawful; but withal say, that every thing is forbidden, that should be esteemed as any part of divine worship, that is not commanded; and if it were not, yet for want of such a command, or divine institution, it can have neither use nor efficacy, with respect to the end of all religious worship.

Our author speaks with his wonted confidence in this matter; yea, it seems to rise to its highest pitch: as also doth his contempt of his adversaries, or whatever is or may be offered by them in the justification of this principle. 'Infinite certainty' on his own part, p. 193. 'baffled and intolerable impertinencies; weak and puny arguments; cavils of a few hot-headed and brainsick people,' with other opprobrious expressions of the like nature, filling up a great part of his leaves, are what he can afford unto those whom he opposeth. But yet I am not, for all this bluster, well satisfied, much less 'infinitely certain,' that he doth in any competent measure understand aright the controversy, about which he treats with all this wrath and confidence. For the sum of all that here he pleads, is no more but this; that 'the circumstances of actions in particular are various, and as they are not, so they cannot be determined by the word of God; and therefore must be ordered by human prudence and authority:' which if he suppose that any man deny, I shall the less wonder at his severe reflections upon them; though I shall never judge them necessary or excusable in any case whatever. Page 198. he imposeth it on others that lie under the power of this persuasion, 'That they are obliged in conscience to act contrary to whatever their superiors command them in the worship of God:' which farther sufficiently evidenceth, that either he understands not the controversy under debate, or that he believes not himself in

what he saith: which, because the harsher imputation, I shall avoid the owning of in the least surmise.

Section 6. From the concession, that the magistrate 'may take care, that the laws of Christ be executed;' that is, command and require his subjects to observe the commands of Christ, in that way, and by such means, as those commands, from the nature of the things themselves, and according to the rule of the gospel, may be commanded and required; he infers, that he hath himself power of making laws in religion. But why so? and how doth this follow? Why, saith he, 'It is apparently implied, because whoever hath a power to see that laws be executed, cannot be without a power to command their execution.' Very good: but the conclusion should have been, He cannot be without a power to make laws in the matter, about which he looks to the execution: which would be good doctrine for justices of the peace to follow. But what is here laid down is nothing but repeating of the same thing in words a little varied; as if it had been said, He that hath power to see the laws executed, or a power to command their execution, he hath power to see the laws executed, or a power to command their execution: which is very true. And this we acknowledge the magistrate hath, in the way before declared. But that because he may do this, he may also make laws of his own in religion, it doth not at all follow from hence, whether it be true or no. But this is farther confirmed from 'the nature of the laws of Christ, which have only declared the substance and morality of religious worship: and therefore must needs have left the ordering of its circumstances to the power and wisdom of lawful authority.' 'The laws of Christ,' which are intended, are those which he hath given concerning the worship of God. That these have determined the 'morality of religious worship,' I know not how he can well allow, who makes the law of nature to be the measure of morality, and all moral religious worship. And for 'the substance of religious worship,' I wish it were well declared what is intended by it. For my part I think that whatever is commanded by Christ, the observation of it is of the substance of religious worship; else I am sure the sacraments are not so. Now do but give men leave, as rational creatures, to observe those commands of Christ in such a way and manner as the nature

of them requires them to be observed; as he hath himself in general rules prescribed; as the concurrent actions of many in society make necessary; and all this controversy will be at an end. When a duty, as to the kind of it, is commanded in particular, or instituted by Christ in the worship of God, he hath given general rules to guide us in the individual performance of it, as to the circumstances that the actions whereby it is performed will be attended withal. For the disposal of those circumstances according to those rules, prudence is to take place and to be used. For men who are obliged to act as men in all other things, are not to be looked on as brutes in what is required of them in the worship of God.

But to institute mystical rites, and fixed forms of sacred administrations, whereof nothing in the like kind doth necessarily attend the acting of instituted worship, is not to determine circumstances, but to ordain new parts of divine worship: and such injunctions are here confessed by our author, p. 191. to be 'new and distinct commands by themselves,' and to enjoin something that the Scripture nowhere commands: which when he produceth a warranty for, he will have made a great progress towards the determining of the present controversy.

Page 192. he answers an objection, consisting of two branches, as by him proposed; whereof the first is, 'That it cannot stand with the love and wisdom of God, not to take order himself for all things that immediately concern his own worship and kingdom.' Now though I doubt not at all, but that God hath so done; yet I do not remember at present, that I have read any imposing the necessity hereof upon him, in answer to his love and wisdom. I confess Valerianus Magnus, a famous writer of the church of Rome, tells us, that never any one did so foolishly institute or order a commonwealth, as Jesus Christ must be thought to have done, if he have not left one supreme judge to determine the faith and consciences of men in matters of religion and divine worship. And our author seems not to be remote from that kind of reasoning, who, without an assignment of a power to that purpose, contendeth that all things among men will run into confusion; of so little concernment do the Scriptures, and the authority of God in them, to some

seem to be. We do indeed thankfully acknowledge that God, out of his love and wisdom, hath ordered all things belonging to his worship and spiritual kingdom in the world. And we do suppose we need no other argument to evince this assertion, but to challenge all men who are otherwise minded, to give an instance of any defect in his institutions to that purpose. And this we are the more confirmed in, because those things which men think good to add unto them, they dare not contend that they are parts of his worship; or that they are added to supply any defect therein. Neither did ever any man yet say, that there is a defect in the divine institutions of worship, which must be supplied by a minister's wearing a surplice. All then that is intended in this consideration, though not urged, as is here pretended, is, that God in his goodness, love, and care towards his church, hath determined all things that are needful in or to his worship: and about what is not needful, men, if they please, may contend; but it will be to no great purpose.

The other part of the objection, which he proposeth to himself, is laid down by him in these words: 'If Jesus Christ hath not determined all particular rites and circumstances of religion, he hath discharged his office with less wisdom and fidelity than Moses; who ordered every thing appertaining to the worship of God, even as far as the pins or nails of the tabernacle.' And hereunto in particular he returns in answer not one word; but only ranks it amongst idle and impertinent reasonings. And I dare say he wants not reasons for his silence: whether they be pertinent or no, I know not. For setting aside the advantage that, it is possible, he aimed to make in the manner and terms of the proposal of this objection to his sentiments; and it will appear, that he hath not much to offer for its removal. We dispute not about the rites and circumstances of religion, which are terms ambiguous, and, as hath been declared, may be variously interpreted, no more than we do about the nails of the tabernacle, wherein there were none at all. But it is about the worship of God and what is necessary thereunto. The ordering hereof, that is, of the house of God and all things belonging thereunto, was committed to Jesus Christ, as a Son over his own house; Heb. iii. 3—5. In the discharge of his trust therein, he was faithful as was Moses;

who received that testimony from God, that he 'was faithful in all his house,' upon his ordering all things in the worship of God as he commanded him, without adding any thing of his own thereunto, or leaving any thing uninstituted or undetermined, which was to be of use therein. From the faithfulness of Christ, therefore, in and over the house of God, as it is compared with the faithfulness of Moses, it may be concluded, I think, that he ordered all things for the worship of God in the churches of the New Testament, as far as Moses did in and for the church of the Old; and more is not contended for. And it will be made appear, that his commission in this matter was as extensive as that of Moses at the least; or he could not, in that trust and the discharge of it, have that pre-eminence above him, which in this place is ascribed unto him.

Section 7. an account is given of the great variety of circumstances, which do attend all human actions; whence it is impossible that they should be all determined by divine prescription. The same we say also; but add withal, that if men would leave these circumstances free under the conduct of common prudence in the instituted worship of God, as they are compelled so to do in the performance of moral duties, and as he himself hath left them free, it would be as convenient for the reasons and consciences of men, as an attempt to the contrary. Thus we have an instance given us by our author in the moral duty of charity, which is commanded us of God himself; but the times, seasons, manner, objects, measures of it are left free, to be determined by human prudence, upon emergencies and occasions. It may be now inquired, whether the magistrate, or any other, can determine those circumstances by a law? and whether they are not, as by God, so by all wise men, left free, under the conduct of their reason and conscience, who are obliged to the duty itself by the command of God? And why may not the same rule and order be observed with respect to the circumstances that attend the performance of the duties of instituted worship? Besides, there are general circumstances that are capable of a determination: such are time and place as naturally considered, without such adjuncts as might give them a moral consideration, or render them good or evil; these the magistrate may determine. But for par-

ticular circumstances attending individual actions, they will hardly be regulated by a standing law. But none of these things have the least interest in our debate. To add things necessarily to be observed in the worship of God, no way naturally related unto the actions wherewith prescribed worship is to be performed, and then to call them circumstances thereof, erects a notion of things which nothing but interest can digest and concoct.

His eighth section is unanswerable. It contains such a strenuous reviling of the Puritans, and contemptuous reproaches of their writings, with such encomiums of their adversaries, as there is no dealing with it. And so I leave it. And so likewise I do his ninth, wherein, as he saith, 'He upbraids the men of his contest with their shameful overthrows; and dares them to look those enemies in the face, that have so lamentably cowed them, by so many absolute triumphs and victories.' Which kind of juvenile exultations on feigned suppositions will, I suppose, in due time, receive an allay from his own more advised thoughts and considerations. The instance wherewith he countenanceth himself in his triumphant acclamations unto the victory of his party, is the book of Mr. Hooker, and its being unanswered. Concerning which I shall only say; that, as I wish the same moderation, ingenuity, and learning, unto all that engage in the same cause with him in these days; so if this author will mind us of any one argument in his longsome discourse, not already frequently answered, and that in print long ago, that it shall have its due consideration. But this kind of discourses, it may be, on second thoughts, will be esteemed not so comely. And I can mind him of those, who boast as highly of some champions of their own against all Protestants, as he can do of any patron of those opinions which he contendeth for. But it doth not always fall out, that those who have the most outward advantages and greatest leisure, have the best cause and abilities to manage it.

The next sections treat concerning superstition, will-worship, and popery; which, as he saith, having been charged by some on the church unduly, he retorts the crime of them upon the authors of that charge. I love not to strive, nor will I contend about words that may have vari-

ous significations fixed on them. It is about things that we differ. That which is evil, is so, however you call it, and whether you can give it any special name or no. That which is good, will still be so, call it what and how men please. The giving of a bad or odious name to any thing, doth not make itself to be bad or odious. The managing therefore of those appellations, either as to their charge or recharge, I am no way concerned in. When it is proved that men believe, teach, or practise otherwise, than in duty to God they ought to do, then they do evil: and when they obey his mind and will in all things, then they do well; and in the end will have the praise thereof. In particular, I confess superstition, as the word is commonly used, denotes a vicious habit of mind with respect unto God and his worship; and so is not a proper denomination for the worship itself, or of any evil or crime in it: but yet, if it were worth contending about, I could easily manifest, that according to the use of the word by good authors in all ages, men have been charged with that crime, from the kind and nature of the worship itself observed by them. And when St. Paul charged the Athenians with an excess in superstition, it was from the multiplication of their gods, and thronging them together, right or wrong, in the dedication of their altars. But these things belong not at all to our present design. Let them who enjoin things unto an indispensable necessary observation in the worship of God, which are not by him prescribed therein, take care of their own minds, that they be free from the vice of superstition; and they shall never be judged, or charged by me therewith. Though I must say, that a multiplication of instances in this kind, as to their own observation, is the principal, if not the only way whereby men who own the true and proper object of religious worship, do or may manifest themselves to be influenced by that corrupt habit of mind; so that they may relate unto superstition, as the effect to its cause. But the recrimination here insisted on, with respect unto them who refuse admittance unto, or observance of things so enjoined, is such as ought to be expected from provocations, and a desire of retortion. Such things usually taste of the cask, and are sufficiently weak and impertinent For it is a mistake that those charged do make, as it is here expressed,

'any thing necessary not to be done;' or put 'any religion in the not doing of any thing,' or the non-observance of any rites, orders, or ceremonies; any other, than every one puts in his abstinence from what God forbids; which is a part of our moral obedience.

And the whole question in this matter is not, whether, as it is here phrased, 'God hath tied up his creatures to nice and pettish laws; laying a greater stress upon a doubtful or indifferent ceremony, than upon the great duty of obedience;' but merely, whether men are to observe in the worship of God, what they apprehend he hath enjoined them; and to abstain from what he doth forbid; according to all the light that they have into his mind and will: which inquiry, as I suppose, may be satisfied; that they are so to practise, and so to abstain, without being liable to the charge of superstition. No man can answer for the minds of other men; nor know what depraved vicious habits and inclinations they are subject unto. Outward actions are all that we are in any case allowed to pass judgment upon; and of men's minds, as those actions are indications of them. Let men, therefore, observe and do in the worship of God whatever the Lord Christ hath commanded them; and abstain from what he hath forbidden, whether in particular instances, or by general directive precepts and rules; by which means alone many things are capable of falling under a prohibition, without the least thought of placing any worship of God in their abstinence from this or that thing in particular; and I think, they need not much concern themselves in the charge of superstition, given in or out by any against them.

For what is discoursed section 11. about will-worship, I cannot so far agree with our author, as I could in what passed before about superstition; and that partly because I cannot discern him to be herein at any good agreement with himself. For 'superstition,' he tells us, 'consists in the apprehensions of men, when their minds are possessed with weak and uncomely conceits of God;' p. 201. here, that 'will-worship consists in nothing else than in men's making their own fancies and inventions necessary parts of religion;' which outward actings are not coincident with the inward frame and habit of mind before described. And I do heartily

wish that some men could well free themselves from the charge of will-worship, as it is here described by our author; though cautelously expressed, to secure the concernments of his own interest from it. For although I will not call the things they contend to impose on others in the worship of God, their fancies; yet themselves acknowledge them to be their inventions: and when they make them necessary to be observed in the whole worship of God, as public and stated, and forbid the celebration of that worship without them; when they declare their usefulness, and spiritual or mystical significancy in that worship or service, designed to honour God in or by their use; setting up some of them to an exclusion of what Christ hath commanded; if I cannot understand, but that they make them necessary parts of God's worship, as to the actual observance of it, I hope they will not be angry with me; since I know the worst they can possibly with truth charge upon me in this matter, is, that I am not so wise, nor of so quick an understanding as themselves. Neither doth our author well remove his charge from those whose defence he hath undertaken: for he doth it only by this consideration; 'that they do not make the things, by them introduced in the worship of God, to be parts of religion. They are not so,' he saith, 'nor are made so by them.' For this hinders not but that they may be looked on as parts of divine worship; seeing we are taught by the same hand, 'that external worship is no part of religion at all.' And let him abide by what he closeth this section withal; namely, that they make not any additions to the worship of God, but only provide, that what God hath required, be performed in an orderly and decent manner, and as to my concern, there shall be an end of this part of our controversy.

The ensuing paragraphs about 'Christian liberty; adding to the commands of God; and popery;' are of the same nature with those preceding about superstition and will-worship. There is nothing new in them but words, and they may be briefly passed through. For the charge of popery, on the one side or other, I know nothing in it; but that, when any thing is enjoined or imposed on men's practice in the worship of God, which is known to have been invented in and by the papal church during the time

of its confessed apostacy, it must needs beget prejudices against it in the minds of them who consider the ways, means, and ends of the fatal defection of that church; and are jealous of a sinful compliance with it in any of those things. The recharge on those who are said 'to set up a pope in every man's conscience, whilst they vest it with a power of countermanding the decrees of princes;' if no more be intended by 'countermanding,' but a refusal to observe their decrees, and yield obedience to them in things against their consciences, which is all can be pretended; if it fall not on this author himself, as in some cases it doth; and which by the certain conduct of right reason, must be extended to all, wherein the consciences of men are affected with the authority of God; yet it doth on all Christians in the world, that I know of, besides himself. For 'adding to the law of God,' it is not charged on any, that they add to his commands; as though they made their own divine, or part of his word and law: but only that they add in his worship to the things commanded by him, which being forbidden in the Scripture, when they can free themselves from it, I shall rejoice; but as yet see not how they can so do. Nor are there any, that I know of, who 'set up any prohibitions of their own,' in or about the worship of God, or any thing thereunto pertaining, as is unduly, and unrighteously pretended. There may be indeed some things enjoined by men, which they do and must abstain from, as they would do from any other sin whatever. But their consciences are regulated by no prohibitions, but those of God himself. And things are prohibited and made sinful unto them, not only when in particular, and by a specification of their instances, they are forbidden; but also when there lie general prohibitions against them on any account whatever. Some men indeed think, that if a particular prohibition of any thing might be produced, they would acquiesce in it; whilst they plead an exemption of sundry things from being included in general prohibitions; although they have the direct formal reason attending them, on which those prohibitions are founded. But it is to be feared, that this also is but a pretence. For let any thing be particularly forbidden, yet if men's interest and superstition induce them to observe or retain it, they will find out distinctions to

evade the prohibition, and retain the practice. What can be more directly forbidden, than the making or using of graven images in or about religious worship? And yet we know how little some men do acquiesce in that prohibition. And it was the observation of a learned prelate of this nation, in his rejection of the distinctions whereby they endeavoured to countenance themselves in their idolatry; that the particular instances of things forbidden in the second commandment, are not principally intended; but the general rule, of not adding any thing in the worship of God without his institution. 'Non imago,' saith he, 'non simulachrum prohibetur; sed non facies tibi.' What way, therefore, any thing becomes a sin unto any, be it by a particular or general prohibition; be it from the scandal that may attend its practice; unto him it is a sin. And it is a wild notion, that when any persons abstain from the practice of that in the worship of God, which to them is sinful as so practised, they add prohibitions of their own to the commands of God.

The same is to be said concerning Christian liberty. No man, that I know of, makes 'things indifferent to be sinful,' as is pretended; nor can any man in his right wits do so. For none can entertain contradictory notions of the same thing, at the same time; as those are, that the same things are indifferent, that is, not sinful, and sinful. But this some say: that things in their own nature indifferent, that is, absolutely so, may be yet relatively unlawful; because, with respect unto that relation, forbidden of God. To set up an altar of old for a civil memorial in any place, was a thing indifferent: but to set up an altar to offer sacrifices on, where the tabernacle was not, was a sin. It is indifferent for a man that understands that language, to read the Scripture in Latin, or in English: but to read it in Latin unto a congregation that understands it not, as a part of God's worship, would be sin. Nor doth our Christian liberty consist alone in our judgment of the indifferency of things in their own nature, made necessary to practise by commands, as hath been shewed. And if it doth so, the Jews had that privilege as much as Christians. And they are easily offended, who complain that their Christian liberty, in the practice of what they think meet in the worship of God, is intrenched on by such, as leaving them to their pleasure,

because of their apprehension of the will of God to the contrary, cannot comply with them in their practice.

The close of this chapter is designed to the removal of an objection, pretended to be weighty and difficult; but indeed made so merely by the novel opinions advanced by this author. For laying aside all respect unto some uncouth principles broached in this discourse, there is scarce a Christian child of ten years old, but can resolve the difficulty pretended, and that according to the mind of God. For it is supposed, that the magistrate may 'establish a worship that is idolatrous and superstitious:' and an inquiry is made thereon, what the subject shall do in that case? Why? where lies the difficulty? Why, saith he, 'in this case they must be either rebels, or idolaters. If they obey, they sin against God: if they disobey, they sin against their sovereign.' According to the principles hitherto received in Christian religion, any one would reply, and say, No: for it is certain, that men must obey God, and not contract the guilt of such horrible sins, as idolatry and superstition; but in so doing they are neither rebels against their ruler, nor do sin against him. It is true, they must quietly and patiently submit to what they may suffer from him: but they are in so doing guilty of no rebellion nor sin against him. Did ever any Christian yet so much as call it into question, whether the primitive Christians were rebels, and sinned against their rulers, because they would not obey those edicts, whereby they established idolatrous worship? Or did any one ever think, that they had a difficult case of conscience to resolve in that matter? They were indeed accused by the pagans as rebels against the emperors; but no Christian ever yet thought their case to have been doubtful. But all this difficulty ariseth from the making of two gods, where there ought to be but one. And this renders the case so perplexed, that, for my part, I cannot see directly how it is determined by our author. Sometimes he speaks as though it were the duty of subjects to comply with the establishment of idolatry supposed, as pp. 214, 215. for with respect, as I suppose it is, to the case as by him stated, that he says, 'Men must not withdraw their obedience:' and better 'submit unto the unreasonable impositions of Nero or Caligula, than to hazard the dissolu-

tion of the state.' Sometimes he seems not to oblige them in conscience to practise according to the public prescription; but only pleads, that the magistrate may punish them if they do not; and fain would have it thought, that he may do so justly. But these things are certain unto us in this matter, and are so many κυρίαι δόξαι in Christian religion; that if the supreme magistrate command any thing in the worship of God that is idolatrous, we are not to practise it accordingly; because we must obey God rather than men. Nextly, that in our refusal of compliance with the magistrate's commands, we do neither rebel nor sin against him. For God hath not, doth not at any time, shut us up in any conditions unto a necessity of sinning. Thirdly, that in case the magistrate shall think meet, through his own mistakes and misapprehensions, to punish, destroy, and burn them alive, who shall not comply with his edicts, as did Nebuchadnezzar; or as they did in England in times of popery; after all honest and lawful private ways of self-preservation used, which we are obliged unto, we are quietly and patiently to submit to the will of God in our sufferings, without opposing or resisting by force, or stirring up seditions or tumults, to the disturbance of public peace. But our author hath elsewhere provided a full solution of this difficulty, chap. viii. p. 308. where he tells us, 'That in cases and disputes of a public concern, private men are not properly 'sui juris;' they have no power over their actions; they are not to be directed by their own judgments, or determined by their own wills; but by the commands and determinations of the public conscience. And if there be any sin in the command, he that imposed it shall answer for it, and not I whose duty it is to obey. The commands of authority will warrant my obedience, my obedience will hallow or at least excuse my action; and so secure me from sin, if not from error, because I follow the best guide and most probable direction I am capable of; and though I may mistake, my integrity shall preserve my innocence; and in all doubtful and disputable cases it is better to err with authority, than to be in the right against it.' When he shall produce any one divine writer, any of the ancient fathers, any sober schoolmen, or casuists, any learned modern divines, speaking at this rate, or giving countenance unto this direction

given to men, for the regulating of their moral actions, it shall be farther attended unto. I know some such thing is muttered amongst the pleaders for blind obedience upon vows voluntarily engaged into, for that purpose. But as it is acknowledged by themselves, that by those vows they deprive themselves of that right and liberty which naturally belongs unto them, as unto all other men, wherein they place much of the merit of them; so by others those vows themselves, with all the pretended brutish obedience that proceeds from them, are sufficiently evidenced to be a horrible abomination, and such as make a ready way for the perpetration of all villanies in the world, to which purpose that kind of obedience hath been principally made use of. But these things are extremely fond; and not only, as applied unto the worship of God, repugnant to the gospel, but also in themselves to the law of our creation, and that moral dependance on God which is indispensable unto all individuals of mankind. We are told in the gospel, that every one is to be fully persuaded in his own mind; that whatever is not of faith is sin; that we are not to be (in such things) the servants of men; that other men's leading of us amiss, whoever they are, will not excuse us; 'for if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch;' and he that followeth, is as sure to perish as he that leadeth. The next guides of the souls and consciences of men, are doubtless those who speak unto them in the name of God, or preachers of the gospel. Yet are all the disciples of Christ, frequently warned to 'take heed' that they be not deceived by any, under that pretence, but diligently examining what is proposed unto them, they discern in themselves what is good and evil. Nor doth the great apostle himself require us to be followers of him, any farther than he was a follower of Christ. They will find small relief, who at the last day shall charge their sins on the commands of others, whatever hope to the contrary they are put into by our author. Neither will it be any excuse that we have done according to the precepts of men, if we have done contrary to those of God. Ephraim, of old, 'was broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment;' Hos. v. 11. But would not his obedience hallow, or at least excuse his action? And would not

the authority of the king warrant his obedience? Or must Ephraim now answer for the sin, and not he only that imposed the command? But it seems that when Jeroboam sinned, who at that time had this goodly creature of the public conscience in keeping, he made Israel sin also, who obeyed him. It is moreover a brave attempt to assert that private men with respect to any of their moral actions, are not properly 'sui juris,' have no power over their actions, are not to be directed by their own judgments, or determined by their own wills. This is Circe's rod, one stroke whereof turned men into hogs. For to what purpose serve their understandings, their judgments, their wills, if not to guide and determine them in their actions? I think he would find hard work, that should go about to persuade men to put out their own eyes, or blind themselves, that they might see all by one public eye. And I am sure it is no less unreasonable, to desire them to reject their own wills, understandings, and judgments, to be led and determined by a public conscience; considering especially that that public conscience itself is a mere 'tragelaphus,' which never had existence in 'rerum natura.' Besides, suppose men should be willing to accept of this condition of renouncing their own understandings and judgments, from being their guides as to their moral actions; I fear it will be found that indeed they are not able so to do. Men's understandings, and their consciences, are placed in them by him who made them, to rule in them and over their actions in his name, and with respect unto their dependence on him. And let men endeavour it whilst they please, they shall never be able utterly to cast off this yoke of God, and destroy this order of things, which is by him inlaid in the principles of all rational beings. Men, whilst they are men, in things that have a moral good or evil in them or adhering to them, must be guided and determined by their own understandings whether they will or no. And if by any means, they stifle the actings of them at present, they will not avoid that judgment, which, according to them, shall pass upon them at the last day. But these things may elsewhere be farther pursued. In the mean time the reader may take this case as it is determined by the learned prelate before mentioned, in his dialogue about subjection and obedience against the Papists, whose words are as follow. Part

iii. p. 297. '*Philand.* If the prince establish any religion, whatever it be, you must by your oath obey it. *Theoph.* We must not rebel and take arms against the prince; but with reverence and humility serve God before the prince, and that is nothing against our oath. *Philand.* Then is not the prince supreme. *Theoph.* Why so? *Philand.* Yourselves are superior, when you serve whom you list. *Theoph.* As though to serve God according to his will, were to serve whom we list, and not whom princes and all others ought to serve. *Philand.* But you will be judges, when God is well served, and when not. *Theoph.* If you can excuse us before God when you mislead us, we will serve him as you shall appoint us; otherwise, if every man shall answer for himself, good reason he be master of his own conscience, in that which toucheth him so near, and no man shall excuse him for. *Philand.* This is to make every man supreme judge of religion. *Theoph.* The poorest wretch that is may be supreme governor of his own heart; princes rule the public and external actions of their countries, but not the consciences of men.' This in his days was the doctrine of the church of England; and as was observed before, no person who then lived in it, knew better what was so.

The sole inquiry remaining is, Whether the magistrate, having established such a religion, as is idolatrous or superstitious, may justly and lawfully punish and destroy his subjects, for their noncompliance therewithal? This is that, which, if I understand him, our author would give countenance unto; contrary to the common sense of all Christians, yea, of common sense itself. For whereas he interweaves his discourse with suppositions, that men may mistake in religion, and abuse it; all such interpositions are purely sophistical, seeing the case proposed to resolution, which ought in the whole to be precisely attended unto, is about the refusal to observe and practise a religion idolatrous or superstitious. Of the like nature is that argument, which alone he makes use of here and elsewhere, to justify his principles; namely, the necessity of government; and how much better the worst government is, and the most depraved in its administration, than anarchy or confusion. For as this by all mankind is unquestioned; so I do not think there

is any one among them, who can tell how to use this concession to our author's purpose. Doth it follow, that because magistrates cannot justly nor righteously prescribe an idolatrous religion, and compel their subjects to the profession and obedience of it; and because the subjects cannot, nor ought to yield obedience therein, because of the antecedent and superior power of God over them: that therefore anarchy or confusion must be preferred before such an administration of government? Let the magistrate command what he will in religion, yet whilst he attends unto the ends of all civil government, that government must needs be every way better than none; and is by private Christians to be borne with, and submitted unto, until God in his providence shall provide relief. The primitive Christians lived some ages in the condition described; refusing to observe the religion required by law; and exercising themselves in the worship of God, which was strictly forbidden. And yet neither anarchy, nor confusion, nor any disturbance of public tranquillity did ensue thereon. So did the Protestants here in England in the days of queen Mary, and some time before. The argument, which he endeavours in these discourses to give an answer unto, is only of this importance: If the supreme magistrate may command what religion he pleaseth, and enact the observation of it under destructive penalties; whereas the greatest part of magistrates in the world will and do prescribe such religions and ways of divine worship, as are idolatrous or superstitious, which their subjects are indispensably bound in conscience not to comply withal; then is the magistrate justified in the punishing of men for their serving of God as they ought; and they may suffer as evil doers, in what they suffer as Christians. This, all the world over, will justify them that are uppermost, and have power in their hands (on no other ground, but because they are so, and have so), in their oppressions and destructions of them, that being under them in civil respects, do dissent from them in things religious. Now whether this be according to the mind of God or no, is left unto the judgment of all indifferent men. We have, I confess, I know not how many expressions interposed in this discourse, as was observed, about sedition, troubling of public peace, men being turbulent against prescribed rules of worship,

whereof if he pretend, that every peaceable dissenter and dissent from what is publicly established in religious worship, are guilty, he is a pleasant man in a disputation; and, if he do any thing, he determines his case proposed on the part of compliance with idolatrous and superstitious worship. If he do not so, the mention of them in this place is very importune and unseasonable. All men acknowledge, that such miscarriages and practices may be justly coerced and punished. But what is this to a bare refusal to comply in any idolatrous worship, and a peaceable practice of what God doth require, as that which he will accept and own?

But our author proceeds to find out many pretences, on the account whereof, persons whom he acknowledgeth to be innocent and guiltless, may be punished. And though their 'apprehensions in religion be not,' as he saith, 'so much their crime, as their infelicity, yet there is no remedy, but it must expose them to the public rods and axes;' p. 219. I have heard of some wise and righteous princes, who have affirmed, that they had rather let twenty guilty persons go free, than punish or destroy one that is innocent. This seems to render them more like him, whose vicegerents they are, than to seek out colourable reasons for the punishment of them, whom they know to be innocent; which course is here suggested unto them. Such advice might be welcome to him, whom men called πήλον αἵματι πεφυραμένον, 'clay mingled and leavened with blood;' others no doubt will abhor it, and detest it. But what spirit of meekness and mercy our author is acted by, he discovereth in the close of this chapter, p. 223. for, saith he, 'it is easily imaginable how an honest and well-meaning man may, through mere ignorance, fall into such errors, which, though God will pardon, yet governors must punish. His integrity may expiate the crime, but cannot prevent the mischief of his error. Nay, so easy is it for man to deserve to be punished for their consciences, that there is no nation in the world, in which (were government rightly understood and duly managed) mistakes and abuses of religion would not supply the galleys with vastly greater numbers, than villany.' There is no doubt, but that if Phaeton get into the chariot of the sun, the world will be sufficiently fired. And if every Absalom who thinks he understands govern-

ment and the due management of it, better than its present possessors, were enthroned, there would be havoc enough made among mankind. But blessed be God, who in many places, hath disposed it into such hands, as under whom, those who desire to fear and serve him according to his will, may yet enjoy a more tolerable condition than such adversaries are pleased withal. That honest and well-meaning men, falling into errors about the worship of God, through their own ignorance, wherein their 'integrity may expiate their crime; must be punished, must not be pardoned;' looks, methinks, with an appearance of more severity than it is the will of God that the world should be governed by; seeing one end of his instituting and appointing government among men, is, to represent himself in his power, goodness, and wisdom unto them. And he that shall conjoin another assertion of our author, namely, that it is 'better and more eligible to tolerate debaucheries and immoralities in conversation, than liberty of conscience for men to worship God according to those apprehensions which they have of his will;' with the close of this chapter, 'that it is so easy for men to deserve to be punished for their consciences, that there is no nation in the world, in which, were government rightly understood, and duly managed, mistakes and abuses of religion would not supply the galleys with vastly greater numbers, than villany;' will easily judge with what spirit, from what principles, and with what design, this whole discourse was composed.

But I find myself, utterly besides and beyond my intention, engaged in particular controversies: and finding by the prospect I have taken of what remains in the treatise under consideration; that it is of the same nature and importance, with what is past, and a full continuation of those opprobrious reproaches of them whom he opposeth; and open discoveries of earnest desires after their trouble and ruin, which we have now sufficiently been inured unto; I shall choose rather here to break off this discourse, than farther to pursue the ventilation of those differences, wherein I shall not willingly, or of choice, at any time engage. Besides, what is in the whole discourse of especial and particular controversy, may be better handled apart by itself: as probably ere long it will be; if this new representation of old

pretences, quickened by invectives, and improved beyond all bounds and measures formerly fixed or given unto them, be judged to deserve a particular consideration. In the mean time this author is more concerned than I, to consider, whether those bold incursions, that he hath made upon the ancient boundaries and rules of religion, and the consciences of men; those contemptuous revilings of his adversaries, which he hath almost filled the pages of his book withal; those discoveries he hath made of the want of a due sense of the weaknesses and infirmities of men, which himself wants not; and of fierce, implacable, sanguinary thoughts against them, who appeal to the judgment-seat of God, that they do not in any thing dissent from him or others, but out of a reverence of the authority of God, and for fear of provoking his holy majesty; his incompassionate insulting over men in distresses and sufferings, will add to the comfort of that account, which he must shortly make before his Lord and ours.

To close up this discourse; the principal design of the treatise thus far surveyed, is to persuade or seduce sovereign princes or supreme magistrates unto two evils, that are indeed inseparable, and equally pernicious to themselves and others. The one of these is, to invade or usurp the throne of God; and the other, to behave themselves therein unlike him. And where the one leads the way, the other will assuredly follow. The empire over religion, the souls and consciences of men in the worship of God, hath hitherto been esteemed to belong unto God alone, to be a peculiar jewel in his glorious diadem. Neither can it spring from any other fountain but absolute and infinite supremacy, such as belongs to him, as he hath alone, who is the first cause and last end of all. All attempts to educe it from, or to resolve it into, any other principle are vain, and will prove abortive. But here the sons of men are enticed to say with him of old, 'We will ascend into heaven; we will exalt our throne above the stars of God; we will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; we will ascend above the heights of the clouds; we will be like the Most High.' For wherein can this be effected? What ladders have men to climb personally into heaven? And who shall attend them in their attempt? It is an assuming of a

dominion over the souls and consciences of men in the worship of God, wherein and whereby this may be pretended, and therein alone. And all this description of the invasion of the throne of God, whence he, who did so, is compared to Lucifer, who sought supremacy in heaven; is but the setting up of his power in and over the church in its worship, which was performed in the temple, the mount of the congregation, and in Zion, on the north of the city of Jerusalem; Isa. xiv. This now princes are persuaded unto: and can scarce escape without reproaches, where they refuse or omit the attempting of it. Suppose they be prevailed with, to run the hazard and adventure of such an undertaking; what is it that they are thereon persuaded unto? How are they directed to behave themselves after they have assumed a likeness unto the Most High, and exalted themselves to his throne? Plainly that which is now expected from them, is nothing but wrath, fury, indignation, persecution, destructions, banishments, ruin of the persons and families of men innocent, peaceable, fearing God, and useful in their several stations, to satisfy their own wills, or to serve the interests of other men. Is this to act like God, whose power and authority they have assumed, or like to his greatest adversary? Doth God deal thus in this world, in his rule over the souls of men? Or is not this that which is set out in the fable of Phaeton, that he, who takes the chariot of the sun, will cast the whole world into a combustion? So he, who of old is supposed to have affected the throne of God, hath ever since acted that cruelty to his power, which manifests what was his design therein, and what would have been the end of his coveted sovereignty. And whoever at any time shall take to himself that power that is peculiar to God, will find himself left in the exercise of it, to act utterly unlike him, yea, contrary unto him. Power, they say, is a liquor, that let it be put into what vessel you will, it is ready to overflow: and as useful as it is, as nothing is more to mankind in this world, yet when it is not accompanied with a due proportion of wisdom and goodness, it is troublesome if not pernicious to them concerned in it. The power of God is infinite, and his sovereignty absolute: but the whole exercise of those glorious dreadful properties of his nature, is regulated by wisdom

and goodness, no less infinite than themselves. And as he hath all power over the souls and consciences of men; so he exercises it with that goodness, grace, clemency, patience, and forbearance, which I hope we are all sensible of. If there be any like him, equal unto him in these things, I will readily submit the whole of my religion and conscience unto him, without the least hesitation. And if God, in his dominion and rule over the souls and consciences of men, do exercise all patience, benignity, long-suffering, and mercy; 'for it is his compassion that we are not consumed;' doth he not declare, that none is meet to be intrusted with that power and rule, but they, who have those things like himself: at least, that in what they are or may be concerned in it, they express, and endeavour to answer his example? Indeed, sovereign princes and supreme magistrates are God's vicegerents, and are called gods on the earth; to represent his power and authority unto men in government, within the bounds prefixed by himself unto them, which are the most extensive that the nature of things is capable of; and in so doing, to conform themselves and their actings to him and his, as he is the great monarch, the prototype of all rule and the exercise of it, in justice, goodness, clemency, and benignity; that so the whole of what they do may tend to the relief, comfort, refreshment, and satisfaction of mankind, walking in the ways of peace and innocency, in answer unto the ends of their rule, is their duty, their honour, and their safety. And to this end, doth God usually and ordinarily furnish them with a due proportion of wisdom and understanding: for they also are of God; he gives them an understanding suited and commensurate to their work; that what they have to do, shall not ordinarily be too hard for them: nor shall they be tempted to mistakes and miscarriages from the work they are employed about, which he hath made to be their own. But if any of them shall once begin to exceed their bounds, to invade his throne, and to take to themselves the rule of any province, belonging peculiarly and solely to the kingdom of heaven; therein a conformity unto God in their actings is not to be expected. For be they never so amply furnished with all abilities of mind and soul for the work, and those duties which are their own, which are proper unto them; yet they are not capable

of any such stores of wisdom and goodness, as should fit them for the work of God, that which peculiarly belongs to his authority and power. His power is infinite; his authority is absolute; so are his wisdom, goodness, and patience. Thus he rules religion, the souls and consciences of men. And when princes partake in these things, infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness, they may assume the same rule and act like him. But to pretend an interest in the one and not in the other, will set them in the greatest opposition to him. Those, therefore, who can prevail with magistrates to take the power of God over religion, and the souls of men in their observance of it, need never fear that when they have so done, they will imitate him in his patience, clemency, meekness, forbearance, and benignity; for they are no way capable of these things in a due proportion to that power, which is not their own; however they may be eminently furnished for that which is so. Thus have we known princes (such as Trajan, Adrian, Julian of old), whilst they kept themselves to their proper sphere, ordering and disposing the affairs of this world, and all things belonging to public peace, tranquillity, and welfare, to have been renowned for their righteousness, moderation, and clemency, and thereby made dear to mankind; who, when they have fallen into the excess of assuming divine power over the consciences of men and the worship of God, have left behind them such footsteps and remembrances of rage, cruelty, and blood in the world, as make them justly abhorred to all generations. This alone is the seat and posture, wherein the powers of the earth are delighted with the sighs and groans of innocent persons, with the fears and dread of them that are and would be at peace; with the punishment of their obedient subjects; and the binding of those hands of industry, which would willingly employ themselves for the public good and welfare. Take this occasion out of the way, and there is nothing that should provoke sovereign magistrates to any thing that is grievous, irksome, or troublesome to men peaceable and innocent; nothing that should hinder their subjects from seeing the presence of God with them in their rule, and his image upon them in their authority, causing them to delight in the thoughts of them, and to pray continually for their con-

tinuance and prosperity. It may be some may be pleased for a season with severities against dissenters, such as concerning whom we discourse; who falsely suppose their interest to lie therein. It may be they may think meet, rather to have all 'debaucheries of life and conversation tolerated,' than liberty for peaceable men to worship God, according to their light and persuasion of his mind and will; as the multitude was pleased of old with the cry of, 'release Barrabas, and let Jesus be crucified;' magistrates themselves will at length perceive, how little they are beholden to any, who importunately suggest unto them fierce and sanguinary counsels in these matters. It is a saying of Maximilian the emperor, celebrated in many authors; 'Nullum,' said he, 'enormius peccatum dari potest, quam in conscientias imperium exercere velle. Qui enim conscientiis imperare volunt, ii arcem cœli invadunt, et plerumque terræ possessionem perdunt.' Magistrates need not fear, but that the open wickedness and bloody crimes of men, will supply them with objects to be examples and testimonies of their justice and severity. And methinks it should not be judged an unequal petition by them, who rule in the stead and fear of God, that those who are innocent in their lives, useful in their callings and occasions, peaceable in the Lord, might not be exposed to trouble, only because they design and endeavour, according to their light, which they are invincibly persuaded to be from God himself, to take care, that they perish not eternally. However I know, I can mind them of advice, which is ten thousand times more their interest to attend unto, than to any that is tendered in the treatise we have had under consideration, and it is that given by a king, unto those that should partake of the like royal authority with himself; Psal. ii. 10—12. 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' And he who can inform me, how they can render themselves more like unto God, more acceptable unto him, and more the concern and delight of mankind, than by relieving peaceable and innocent persons from their fears, cares, and solicitousness about undeserved

evils, or from the suffering of such things, which no mortal man can convince them that they have merited to undergo or suffer; he shall have my thanks for his discovery.

And what is it that we treat about? What is it, that a little truce and peace is desired unto, and pleaded for? What are the concerns of public good therein? Let a little sedate consideration be exercised about these things, and the causelessness of all the wrath we have been conversing withal will quickly appear. That there is a sad degeneracy of Christianity in the world, amongst the professors of Christian religion, from the rule, spirit, worship, and conversation of the first Christians, who in all things observed and expressed the nature, virtue, and power of the gospel, all must acknowledge, and many do complain. Whatever of this kind comes to pass, and by what means soever, it is the interest and design of them, who are present gainers by it in the world, to keep all things in the posture, that yields them their advantage. Hence upon every appearance of an alteration, or apprehension that any will desert the ways of worship wherein they have been engaged, they are cast into a storm of passion and outrage, like Demetrius and the rest of the silversmiths, pretending divisions, present settlement, ancient veneration, and the like; when their gain and advantage, whether known or unknown to themselves, is that, which both influenceth them with such a frame of spirit, and animates them to actings suitable thereunto. Thus in the ages past there was so great and universal an apostacy, long before foretold, overspreading Christianity, that by innumerable sober persons it was judged intolerable: and that, if men had any regard to the gospel of Christ, their own freedom in the world, or everlasting blessedness, there was a necessity of a reformation, and the reduction of the profession of Christian religion unto some nearer conformity to the primitive times and pattern. Into this design sundry kings, princes, and whole nations engaged themselves, namely, what lay in them, and according to the sentiments of truth they had received, to reduce religion unto its pristine glory. What wrath, clamours, fury, indignation, revenge, malice, this occasioned in them whose subsistence, wealth, advantages, honour, and reputation, all lay in preserving things in their state of defection and apostacy, is

known to all the world. Hence therefore arose bloody persecutions in all, and fierce wars in many nations, where this thing was attempted; stirred up by the craft and cruelty of them who had mastered and managed the former declensions of religion to their own use and advantage. The guilt of which mischiefs and miseries unto mankind, is by a late writer amongst ourselves, contrary to all the monuments of times past, and confessions of the adversaries themselves, endeavoured to be cast on the reformers. However, a work of reformation was carried on in the world, and succeeded in many places: in none more eminently, than in this nation wherein we live. That the end aimed at, which was professedly the reduction of religion to its ancient beauty and glory in truth and worship, is attained amongst us, some perhaps do judge, and absolutely acquiesce therein: and for my part I wish we had more did so. For, be it spoken, as I hope, without offence on the part of others, so without fear of giving it, or having it taken, on my own; there are among many, such evident declensions from the first established reformation, towards the old or a new, and it may be worse apostacy; such an apparent weariness of the principal doctrines and practices, which enlivened the reformation; as I cannot but be troubled at, and wherewith many are offended. For although I do own a dissent from some present establishments in the church of England, yet I have that honour for the first reformers of it, and reformation itself; that love to the truth declared and established in it; that respect to the work and grace of God, in the conversion of the souls of thousands by the ministry of the word in these nations; that I cannot but grieve continually to see the acknowledged doctrines of it deserted, its ancient principles and practices derided, its pristine zeal despised by some who make advantage of its outward constitution; inheriting the profits, emoluments, and wealth which the bounty of our kings have endowed it withal; but not its spirit, its love, its steadfastness in owning the Protestant truth and cause. But to return; for these things may better elsewhere be complained of, seeing they relate only to particular persons. That what is done in reformation be established; that any farther public work of the same nature attempted; or the retrievement of what is done to its original

condition and estate, belongs to the determination of the supreme magistrate, and to that alone. Private persons have no call, no warrant to attempt any thing unto those purposes. However many there are, who dislike some ecclesiastical constitutions and modes of outward worship, which have been the matter of great contests from the first reformation: but much more dislike the degeneracy from the spirit, way, and principles of the first reformers before mentioned, which in some at present they apprehend. And therefore though many seem to be at a great distance from the present established forms of the church of England; yet certainly all who are humble and peaceable, when they shall see the ministry of the church, as in former days in some measure, acted rightly and zealously towards the known ends of it, and such as are undeniably by all acknowledged, namely, the conviction of the world, the conversion of souls, and edification of them that do believe; and the discipline of it exercised, in a conformity at least to the rule of the discipline of the secular powers of the earth, 'not to be a terror to the good, but to them that do evil;' and in these things a demonstration of the meekness, humility, patience, forbearance, condescension to the weakness, mistakes, errings, and wanderings of others, which the gospel doth as plainly and evidently require of us, as it doth, that we should believe in Jesus Christ; will continually pray for its prosperity, though they cannot themselves join with it in sundry of its practices and ways. In the mean time, I say, such persons as these, in themselves and for their own concerns, do think it their duty, not absolutely to take up in what hath been attained amongst us; much less in what many are degenerated into; but to endeavour the reduction of their practice in the worship of God, to what was first appointed by Jesus Christ; as being persuaded, that he requires it of them; and being convinced, that in the unspeakable variety that is in human constitutions, rest unto their souls and consciences is not otherwise to be obtained. And if at the same time they endeavour not to reduce the manner and course of their conversation to the same rule and example, by which they would have their worship of God regulated; they are hypocrites. Short enough, no doubt, they come in both of perfection; but

both they profess to aim equally at. And herein alone can their consciences find rest and peace. In the doctrine of faith, consented on in the first reformation, and declared in the allowed writings of the church of England, they agree with others; and wish with all their hearts they had more to agree withal. Only they cannot come up to the practice of some things in the worship of God; which being confessedly of human prescription, their obedience in them would lie in a perfect contradiction to their principal design before mentioned. For those things being chosen out from a great multitude of things of the same nature, invented by by those whose authority was rejected in the first reformation, or reduction of religion from its catholic apostacy; they suppose, cannot justly be imposed on them; they are sure, cannot be honestly received by them, whilst they design to reduce themselves unto the primitive rules and examples of obedience. In this design they profess themselves ready to be ruled by, and to yield subjection unto, any truth or direction, that can or may be given them from the word of God, or any principles lawfully from thence educed. How their conviction is at present attempted, let the book under consideration, and some late unparalleled and illegal acts of violence, conformable to the spirit of it, be a testimony. But in the management of their design, they proceed on no other principles, than those of the liberty of judgment (of discretion or discerning they call it), for the determining of themselves and their own practices, in what they believe and profess about religion, and the liberty of their consciences from all human impositions, than were owned, pleaded, and contended for by the first reformers, and the most learned defenders of the church of England, in their disputations against the Papists; those they will stand to, and abide by: yea, than what are warranted by the principles of our nature and constitution; for no man practiseth any thing, nor can practise it, but according to his own will and choice.

Now in these things, in their principle, or in their management of it, it may be they are mistaken; it may be they are in an error; or under many mistakes and errors. But from their integrity they know themselves innocent, even in their mistakes. And it is in the nature of men to think

strange of sedate violences, that befall them without their demerit, and of suffering by law without any guilt. Their design of reducing themselves in worship and conversation to the primitive pattern, they openly avow: nor dare any directly condemn that design; nor can they be convinced of insincerity in what they profess. And shall they be destroyed, if they miss it in some matters of smaller concernment? which, whatever some may boast of, is not hitherto tolerably proved. Shall now their dissent in religious observances on this occasion, and those, and that about things mostly and chiefly, if not only, that appear neither name nor thing in the Scripture, be judged a crime not to be expiated, but by their ruin? Are immoralities or vicious debaucheries rather to be tolerated, or exempted from punishment, than such a dissent? What place of Scripture in the Old or New Testament, which of the ancient fathers of the church, do speak at this rate? Opinions inconsistent with public tranquillity, with the general rules of moral duties in all relations and conditions; practices of any tendency in themselves to political disturbances, are by none pleaded for. Mere dissent itself, with different observances in the outward worship of God, is by some pretended indeed to be a civil disturbance. It hath always been so by some, even by those, whose own established ways have been superstitious and idolatrous. But wise men begin to smile, when they hear private interest pleaded as public good, and the affections which it begets, as the common reason of things. And these pretences have been by all parties, at one time or another, refuted and discarded. Let the merit of the cause be stated and considered, which is truly as above proposed, and no other: set aside prejudices, animosities, advantages from things past and by-gone in political disorders and tumults, wherein it hath no concern; and it will quickly appear how little it is, how much, if possible, less than nothing, that is or can be pleaded for the countenancing of external severity in this case. Doth it suit the spirit of the gospel, or his commands, to destroy good wheat, for standing, as is supposed, a little out of order, who would not have men pluck up the tares, but to let them stand quietly in the field until harvest? Doth it answer his mind to destroy his disciples, who profess to love and

obey him, from the earth; who blamed his disciples of old for desiring to destroy the Samaritans, his enemies, with fire from heaven? We are told, that he who 'was born after the flesh, persecuted him who was born after the promise:' and a work becoming him it was. And if men are sincere disciples of Christ, though they may fall into some mistakes and errors, the outward persecuting of them on that account will be found to be of the works of the flesh. It is certain, that for those in particular, who take upon them, in any place or degree, to be ministers of the gospel, there are commands for meekness, patience, and forbearance, given unto them; and it is one of the greatest duties incumbent on them, to express the Lord Jesus Christ in the frame of his mind and spirit unto men; and that eminently in his meekness and lowliness, which he calls us all in an especial manner to learn of him. A peculiar conformity also to the gospel, to the holy law of love, self-denial, and condescension, is required of them; that they may not in their spirits, ways, and actings, make a false representation of him, and that which they profess.

I know not therefore whence it is come to pass, that this sort of men do principally, if not only, stir up magistrates and rulers to laws, severities, penalties, coercions, imprisonments, and the like outward means of fierce and carnal power, against those, who in any thing dissent from them in religion. Generally abroad throughout Christendom, those in whose hands the civil powers are, and who may be supposed to have inclinations unto the severe exercise of that power which is their own, such as they think possibly may become them as men and governors, would be inclinable to moderation towards dissenters, were they not excited, provoked, and wearied by them, who pretend to represent Jesus Christ to the world; as if any earthly potentate had more patience, mercy, and compassion, than he. Look on those Lutheran countries where they persecute the Calvinists; it is commonly declared and proved, that the magistrates, for the most part, would willingly bear with those dissenters, were they not stirred up continually to severities by them, whose duty it were to persuade them to clemency and moderation, if in themselves they were otherwise inclined. And this hath ruined the interest of the Protestant

religion in Germany, in a great measure. Do men who destroy no more than they can, nor punish more than they are able, and cry out for assistance where their own arm fails them, render themselves hereby like to their heavenly Father? Is this spirit from above? Doth that, which is so, teach men to harass the consciences of persons, their brethren and fellow-servants, on every little difference in judgment and practice about religious things? Whom will such men fulfil the commands of patience, forbearance, waiting, meekness, condescension, that the gospel abounds with, towards? Is it only towards them who are of the same mind with themselves? They stand in no need of them: they stand upon the same terms of advantage with themselves. And for those that dissent, 'Arise, kill, and eat,' seems to be the only command to be observed towards them. And why all this fierceness and severity? Let men talk what they please, those aimed at, are peaceable in the land; and resolve to be so, whatever may befall them. They despise all contrary insinuations. That they are, in their stations severally, useful to the commonwealth, and collectively, in their industry and trading, of great consideration to public welfare, is now apparent unto all indifferent men. It is, or must be, if it be for any thing (as surely no men delight in troubling others for trouble sake), for their errors and mistakes, in and about the worship of God. All other pleas are mere pretences of passion and interest. But who judgeth them to be guilty of errors? Why those that stir up others to their hurt and disquietment. But is their judgment infallible? How if they should be mistaken themselves in their judgment? If they are, they do not only err, but persecute others for the truth. And this hath been the general issue of this matter in the world: error hath persecuted truth ten times, for truth's once persecuting of error. But suppose the worst; suppose them in errors and under mistakes; let it be proved, that God hath appointed that all men who so err should be so punished, as they would have nonconformists, and though I should believe them in the truth, I would never more plead their cause. And would these men be willingly thus dealt withal, by those who judge, or may judge them to err? It may be some would; because they have a good security, that none shall ever

judge them so to do, who hath power to punish them; for they will be of his mind. But sure none can be so absolutely confined unto themselves, nor so universally in all their affections and desires unto their own personal concerns, as not to have a compassion for some or other, who in one place or other are judged to err by them, who have power over them to affix what guilt they please unto that, which is not their crime. And will they justify all their oppressors? All men have an equal right in this matter; nothing is required, but being uppermost, to make a difference. This is that, which hath turned Christendom into a shambles, whilst every prevailing party hath judged it their duty and interest to destroy them that do dissent from them.

Once more; what name of sin or wickedness will they find to affix to these errors? 'Nullum criminis nomen, nisi nominis crimen.' No man errs willingly, nor ought to be thought to tempt or seduce his own will, when his error is to his disadvantage; and he is innocent whose will is not guilty. Moreover, those pretended errors in our case are not in matters of faith; nor, for the most part, in or about the worship of God, or that which is acknowledged so to be; but in or about those things, which some think it convenient to add unto it, or conjoin with it. And what quietness, what peace is there like to be in the world, whilst the sword of vengeance must be continually drawn about these things? Counsels of peace, patience, and forbearance, would certainly better become professors of the gospel and preachers of everlasting peace, than such passionate and furious enterprises for severity as we meet withal.

And I no way doubt, but that all generous, noble, and heroic spirits, such as are not concerned in the impaled peculiar interest and advantages of some, and do scorn the pedantic humours of mean and emulous souls; when once a few more clouds of prejudices are scattered, will be willing to give up to God the glory of his sovereignty over the consciences of men; and despise the thoughts of giving them disquietments for such things, as they can no way remedy; and which hinder them not from being servants of God, good subjects to the king, and useful in their respective lots and conditions.

And now instead of those words of Pilate, 'What I have written, I have written,' which though uttered by him maliciously and despitefully, as was also the prophecy of Caiaphas, were by the holy, wise providence of God, turned into a testimony to the truth; I shall shut up this discourse with those of our Saviour, which are unspeakably more our concernment to consider; Matt. xxiv. 45—51. 'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord deferreth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

INDULGENCE AND TOLERATION

CONSIDERED:

IN

A LETTER

UNTO

A PERSON OF HONOUR.

INDULGENCE AND TOLERATION

CONSIDERED.

Sir,

I have considered the discourses sent me, published lately about Indulgence and Toleration. At their first view, I confess I was not a little surprised with their number, as not understanding the reason of their multiplication at this time, nor what it was that had made them swarm so unseasonably. Upon their perusal, I quickly perceived a defect in them all, which could no other ways be supplied: whether it be so by this means or no, impartial men will judge. The design seems to have been, that what is wanting in them singly in reason, may jointly be made up in noise; and their respective defects in argument be supplied by their communion in suffrage. It will doubtless be the wisdom of those who are concerned in what they oppose, to stand out of their way, at least until the storm is over.

——— Omnis campis diffugit arator
Omnis et agricola, ———
Dum pluit in terris, ut possint sole reducto
Exercere diem. ———

Their reason will be better attended to, when this earnestness hath a little spent itself; for men who have attained more than perhaps they ever aimed at, at least than they had just reason to expect, have commonly for a while strong desires to secure their possessions, which time and a due consideration of their title and interest may somewhat calm and allay. In the mean time, because you expect it, I shall give you a brief account of my thoughts concerning the matter treated of by them; and if that do not too long detain me, of the reasonings also which they make use of. Some things I do much commend their ingenuity in; for whereas two things were proposed to them, a compliance with some by way of

condescension, and a forbearance of others by way of moderation, they equally declare against them both. They will neither admit others to them, but upon their own terms to the utmost punctilio; nor bear with any in their dissent from them in the least different observances, but all must be alike pursued by law and force, to their ruin. Whether this seem not to be the frame of men's spirits, whose 'fortune and power' (as one of them speaks) 'tempts them to an insolency,' sober and disinterested persons will judge. The minds, I confess, of fortunate men are for the most part equal unto their successes, and what befalls them, they count their due. Nothing else could persuade these men that they alone were to be esteemed Englishmen, and that not only as unto all privileges and advantages attending that title; but so far also, as to desire that all who differ from them should be exterminated from their native soil. It were well if we could see more of their endeavours to merit so high a favour, more of that usefulness and advantage which they bring to the kingdom, that might countenance them in pleading that they alone ought to be in it. For my part, I can see little consistency with Christianity, humanity, or prudence in these resolutions. For certainly, if that be Christian religion which we are taught in the gospel, it inclines men, especially those who are teachers of it (such as the authors of these discourses, at least most of them, seem to be), unto a greater condescension than that expressed upon the causes, and for the ends of its being desired. The request of some for a condescension seem to be no more, but that the rulers of the church would forbear the prescription and imposition of such things on the consciences and practice of men (for it is vain to pretend that conscience is not concerned in practice in the worship of God), as there is not one word about, nor any thing inclining, leading, or directing towards, in the whole Bible, that were never thought of, mentioned, or commanded by Jesus Christ, or his apostles, or any apostolical men; that if they had not unhappily fallen upon the minds of some men to invent, none knows who, nor where, nor when, would have had no concernment in Christian religion.

They indeed who impose them, say they are things in-

different. But the differences that have been almost this hundred years about these things indifferent, is enough to frighten and discourage unbiassed men from having any thing to do with them. And what wise man, methinks, would not at length be contented that these differences and indifferent things may be parted with altogether? Besides, they on whom they are imposed, account them not so: they look upon them as unlawful for them to use and practise (all circumstances considered), at least most of them do so. And they plead by the important argument of their sufferings, that it is merely on the account of conscience that they do not conform unto them. Others think that it is not so; but I am sure it is possible that it may be so; and if it be so, they cannot use them without endangering the eternal ruin of their own souls; though others may speed otherwise in their observances, who have other thoughts and apprehensions of their nature and use. And yet, on the other side, if those that impose these things can make it appear with any probability (I had almost said if they would but pretend) that they were obliged in conscience to impose them, by my consent there should be an end of this strife. But whilst there is this left-handed contest, real will and pretended prudence fighting against conscience and duty, it is like to be untoward and troublesome. And for what end is it that some desire that there might be at least some relaxation as to the present severe impositions of some of the things which are thus contended about? They say it is merely that they might serve God in the gospel to the good of others, without sinning against him, to the ruin of themselves. They speak particularly unto men who profess it to be their calling, their work, their design, to promote the blessed ends of the gospel towards the souls of men: they desire of them that they may have leave to come and help them in reference unto this end. Nor can it be pretended, that they themselves are sufficient for the work, and that they have no need of the assistance of others: God and men know that this cannot be reasonably pleaded.

And this is a business which, certainly by such men as profess themselves to be guides and rulers of the church, can hardly be justified unto him who is the great Lord of it. When the disciples found some casting out of 'devils in his

name,' they rebuked them, because they 'followed not with them;' a worse and greater nonconformity than that which some are now charged withal; and yet the rebuke of others procured only one to themselves. He said well of old, concerning those who contended to promote common good; ἀγαθὴ δ' ἔρις ἥδε βροτοῖσι. 'This is a good strife for mortal men:' so is that which is for promoting of the good of the souls of men by the preaching of the gospel; and shall it be forbid for such things,

——— Quæ dicere nolo,

of so little importance are they in this matter, which hath an influence into eternity? What is answered unto this request? Stories are told of things past and gone; scattered interest, dissolved intrigues, buried miscarriages, such as never can have any aspect on the present posture of affairs and minds of men in this nation, are gathered together, and raked out of their graves, to compose mormoes for the affrightment of men from a regard to the ways of peace and moderation: this they enlarge upon with much rhetoric, and some little sophistry; like him of old, of whom it was said, that being charged with other things,

——— Crimina rasis
Librat in antithetis; doctas posuisse figuras
Laudatur. ———

Many inconveniences are pretended, as like to ensue upon such a condescension: but in the mean time men die, and some, it may be, perish for want of that help and instruction in the things of eternity, which there are many ready to give them, whilst it is altogether uncertain whether any one of the pretended inconveniences will ensue or no: I fear whilst men are so engaged in their thoughts about what is good and convenient for them at the present, they do scarce sufficiently ponder what account of their actions they must make hereafter.

But neither is this all that these authors contend for: men are not only denied by them an admission into their societies to preach the gospel, unless it be on such terms as they cannot in conscience admit of, and which others are no way obliged in conscience to impose upon them; but all forbearance of, or indulgence unto them who cannot conform unto the present establishment, is decried and pleaded

against: What though men are peaceable and useful in the commonwealth? What though they are every way sound in the faith, and cordially embrace all the doctrine taught formerly in the church of England? What though those in this condition are many, and such as in whose peace and industry the welfare of the nation is exceedingly concerned? What if they offer to be instructed by any who will take that work upon them, in the things about which their differences are? What if they plead conscience towards God, and that alone, in their dissent, it being evidently against their whole temporal interest? What if they have given evidence of their readiness in the ways of Christ and the gospel, to oppose every error that is either pernicious to the souls of men, or any way of an evil aspect to public peace and tranquillity? All is one, they are neither severally, nor jointly, no one of them, nor all of them, in the judgment of these gentlemen, to be forborn, or to have any indulgence exercised toward them; but laws are to be made and put in execution against them to their ruin, extirpation, and destruction. It may be it will be said, that these things are unduly imposed on them, seeing they press for a prosecution of men by laws and rigour, not for dissenting from what is established, or not practising what is prescribed in the public worship of God, but for practising what is of their own choice therein, in meetings and assemblies of their own; otherwise they may keep their consciences unto themselves without molestation.

But it doth not appear, that this can be justly pleaded in their defence: for as the prohibition of men, under severe and destructive penalties, from that exercise of the worship of God, which is suitable to their light, and which they are convinced that he requires of them, so that in nothing it interfere with the fundamentals of Christian religion or public tranquillity, is as destitute of all foundation in Scripture and reason at all times, and as things may be circumstantiated in prudence or policy, as the enforcing of them to a practical compliance with any mode or way of worship against their light and conscience; so the practice in this latter case hath been more severe amongst us, than in the former. For a testimony hereof, we have those great multitudes, which at this day are excommunicated by the courts

ecclesiastical, merely for their not attending the public assemblies of the nation in their administrations: and as they are by this means, as things now stand, cast, as they say, into the condition of men outlawed and deprived of all privileges of their birthright as Englishmen (of which sort there are forty times more than have been proceeded against unto the same issue in all his majesty's courts of justice in England for many years), so in the pursuit of that sentence, many are cast into prisons, where they lie perishing (sundry being dead in that state already), whilst their families are starved or reduced to the utmost extremity of poverty, for want of those supplies which their industry formerly furnished them withal: and what influence this will have into the state of this nation, time will manifest, if men are not as yet at leisure to consider. The hands that by this means are taken off from labour, the stocks from employment, the minds from contrivances of industry in their own concerns, the poverty that is brought on families, in all which the common good hath no small interest, are not, I fear, sufficiently considered by persons whose fulness and plenty either diverts their thoughts from taking notice of them, or keeps off any impressions on their minds and judgments from what is represented concerning them. Others begin to feel the evil, whose morning they saw not, gathering up towards them, in the decay of their revenues, and entanglements of their estates, which, without timely remedy, will increase upon them, until the breach grow too great for an ordinary healing.

And I am persuaded that none who have been active in these proceedings, will take upon themselves the trouble of confirming this kind of church discipline out of the Scriptures, or examples of the primitive churches, for some hundreds of years.

This, therefore, is that which by these men is pleaded for; namely, that all the Protestants in England, who so dissent from the established forms and modes of worship, as either to absent themselves from their observances, or to attend unto any other way of worship, which being suitable to the principles of that religion which they profess (namely protestantism), they are persuaded is according to the mind of God, and which he requires of them, be proceeded against,

not only with ecclesiastical censures, but also with outward, pecuniary, and corporal punishments, to the depriving of them, in the progress, of their whole liberty, freedom, and benefit of the laws of the land, and in some cases unto death itself; and that no dispensation or relaxation of this severity be countenanced or granted. And herein, I confess, whatever pretences be used, whatever fears and jealousies of events upon a contrary course, or the granting of an indulgence be pleaded, I am not of their minds; nor do I think that any countenance can be given to this severe principle and opinion, either from the Scriptures of the Old or New Testament, or from the example of any who ever endeavoured a conformity unto the rules of them. This is the state of the controversy, as by these authors formed and handled; nor may any thing else be pretended, when such multitudes are ready to give evidence unto it, by what they have suffered and undergone. Do but open the prisons for the relief of those peaceable, honest, industrious, diligent men, who some of them have lain several years in durance, merely in the pursuit of excommunication, and there will be testimony enough given to this state of the controversy.

This being so, pray give me leave to present you with my hasty thoughts, both as to the reasonableness, conscience, and principles of pursuing that course of severity towards dissenters, which I find so many concerned persons to plead for; and also of the way of their arguings and pleas.

And first as unto reason and conscience, I think men had need look well unto the grounds of their actings, in things wherein they proceed against the common consent of mankind, expressed in all instances of the like occasion, that have occurred in the world; which is as great an evidence of the light and law of nature as any can be obtained; for what all men generally consent in, is from the common nature of all. We are not indeed much concerned to inquire after the practice of the heathen in this matter, because, as the apostle testifies, their idolatrous confusion in religion was directly and manifestly against the light of nature; and where the foundation was laid in a transgression of that law, it is no wonder if the proceeding upon it be so also. There was a law amongst the Romans, reported by the orator to be one of those of the twelve tables, forbidding

any to have private gods of their own: but this regarded the gods themselves, the object of their worship, and not the way of worshipping them, which was peculiar and separate to many families and tribes amongst them, and so observed: scarce any family or tribe of note, that had not its special and separate 'sacra.' Besides, they seemed to have little need of any new authorized gods, seeing, as Varro observed, they had of them they owned no less than thirty thousand. And I have often thought that law was imposed on them by the craft and projection of Satan, to keep them off from the knowledge of the true God: for, notwithstanding this law, they admitted into their superstition all sorts of idols, even the folly of Egyptians themselves, as having temples in Rome unto Isis and Serapis. Only this law was pleaded to keep off the knowledge of the true God; Acts xviii. 13. and of him they had the highest contempt, calling the place of his worship the land

——— Dei incerti. ———

And the custom among the Athenians not to admit any strange objects of worship, any unwarranted devotion, was never made use of, but to oppose the gospel, unless it were when they destroyed the wisest and best man that ever the city bred, for giving some intimation of the true God, and not consenting with the city in opinion about their established devotions: other use of these laws there was none. It is true, when any 'sacra' or superstitious observances were actually used to induce men and women to sin and wickedness, contrary to the light of nature, the very being of civil societies, the Romans severely animadverted upon them: otherwise this law was not made use of, but only against the Jews first, and the Christians afterward; whereby it was consecrated to the use of idolatry, and rendered unmeet for the church's service or reception.

The Jews were those who were first intrusted with the truth of religion and the worship of God; and it is known what was their law, their custom, their practice in this matter. Whoever would dwell amongst them, if they owned their fundamentals, they afforded them the blessing and peace of the land. All that they required of such persons, was but the observation of the seven Noachical pre-

cepts, containing the principles of the light of nature, as to the worship of one God, and moral honesty amongst men; whoever would live amongst them of the Gentiles, and took upon themselves the observation of these fundamentals, although they subjected themselves to no instituted ordinances, they called 'proselytes of the gate,' and gave them all liberty and peace. And in those who submitted unto the law of Moses, who knows not what different sects, and opinions, and modes of worship there were amongst them, which they never once supposed that they had any rule to proceed against by external force and coercion.

The case is yet more evidently expressed in the judgment and actings of the first Christians. It will be utterly superfluous to shew how that for three hundred years, there was not any amongst them who entertained thoughts of outward force against those who differed from the most, in the things of Christian religion. It hath been done, I perceive, of late by others. And yet in that space of time, with that principle, the power of religion subdued the world, and brake the force of that law whereby the Romans, through the instigation of Satan, endeavoured with force and cruelty to suppress it. When the empire became Christian, the same principle bare sway. For though there were mutual violences offered by those who differed in great and weighty fundamental truths, as the Homousians and Arians; as to those who, agreeing in the important doctrines of the gospel, took upon themselves a peculiar and separate way of worship and discipline of their own, whereby they were exempt from the common course and discipline of the church then in use, never any thoughts entered into men to give unto them the least disturbance. The kingdom of Egypt alone had at the same time above forty thousand persons, men and women, living in their private and separate way of worship, without the least control from the governors of church or state; yea, with their approbation and encouragement.

So was it all the world over; not to mention the many different observances that were in and amongst the churches themselves, which occasioned not division, much less persecution of one another. And so prevalent is this principle, that notwithstanding all their design for a forcing unto an

uniformity, as their peculiar interest, yet it hath taken place in the church of Rome itself, and doth so to this day. It is known to all, that there is no nation wherein that religion is enthroned, but that there are thousands in it that are allowed their particular ways of worship, and are exempt from the common ordinary jurisdiction of the church.

It seems, therefore, that we are some of the first who ever any where in the world, from the foundation of it, thought of ruining and destroying persons of the same religion with ourselves, merely upon the choice of some peculiar ways of worship in that religion. And it is but reasonable, as was observed, for men to look well to the grounds of what they do, when they act contrary to the principles of the law of nature, expressed in so many instances by the consent of mankind. And I fear all men do not aright consider, what a secret influence into the enervating of political societies such intrenchments on the principles of natural light will assuredly have; for those things which spring up in the minds of men without arguing or consideration from without, will insensibly prevail in them against all law and constitutions to the contrary. It is in vain to turn nature out of doors, it will return. And whence shall we learn what nature inclines unto, unless from the common practice of mankind in all instances, where an evident demonstration may not be given, of the prevalent influence of the interest of some men unto the contrary? Which is,

——— Pessimus diuturnitatis custos.

It will not always prevail, nor ever at any time without great regret and commotion in the minds of men, who have no concern in that interest.

Consider also the thing itself, of forcing the consciences of men, in manner before expressed; and you will find it so uncouth, as, I am persuaded, you will not know well what to make of it. Learned divines tell us, that conscience is the judgment that a man maketh of himself and his actions, with reference to the future judgment of God; or to that purpose. Now let others do what they will, conscience will still made this judgment, nor can it do otherwise. Whatever men can alter in the outward actings of men's lives, they can alter nothing in the inward constitution of the

nature given it by God in its creation, which refers to its future end. How can this be forced?

It is said, therefore, Let men take this liberty unto themselves: Who forbids them to judge of themselves and of their actions, what they please? None goes about to take this liberty from them.

But is this all? Conscience doth not judge of men and their actions, but with respect unto what in the name of God it requires them to be, or to do. It first requires several things of them in the name of God, and then judges upon their performance, with reference unto the judgment of God. And this is the sovereign dictate of it, Worship God according to that light and understanding which you have, of what is that worship which is acceptable with him, in matter and manner, and no otherwise. If this command be not obeyed, conscience will judge with reference unto the judgment to come. Let conscience then have its liberty for this work, and this difference is at an end.

But it will be said, If conscience must be free as to its first act of directing and commanding, as well as unto its self-judging, it may lead men to all abominations, wickedness, murders, sedition, and filthiness; and so a liberty unto them also must be granted. So I have heard men speak, but I have wondered also that any man that hath a conscience of his own, or knows what conscience is, should give entertainment to so fond an imagination. I would ask any man whether ever he found any such direction in his own conscience, or any inclination that way? nay, if he have not constantly found a severe interdiction given in by his conscience against all such things? And how can he then conceive it possible that the conscience of any man should be of such a make and constitution, seeing naturally it is absolutely the same in all? Besides, as was said, it is a man's judgment of himself in reference to the future judgment of God. And this intimation supposeth, that a man may judge that God at the last day will approve of adultery, murders, seditions and the like evils! which is to suppose all common inbred notions of God to be blotted out of the mind. Nay, it is utterly impossible, as implying a contradiction, that any man should consider God as a judge, as conscience doth always, and suppose his appro-

bation of the evils specified, or of any of the like nature and importance. But men will yet say that conscience hath been pretended for these things. I answer, never by any in their wits. And what any brainsick, or enthusiastic person may say or do in his paroxysms, is not to have any place in considerations of what becomes a guidance of the actions of mankind one towards another. It is true, that some things as they have been circumstantiated, have been debated, even in conscience, whether they have been lawful or no; that is, whether God would approve of them, or condemn them at the last day. But what is evil in itself, and against the light of nature, there is no direction unto it, no approbation of it from conscience in the least. To take away this liberty of conscience in things of its proper cognizance and duty, seems to me to be as much as to say, men shall not judge themselves with reference to the judgment of God to come; which is to put God's great vicegerent out of his place and throne.

Let us now apply this notion of conscience unto the present occasion. There is prescribed a way of divine worship, with ceremonies, forms of prayer, and orders for the administration of sacraments, all things that concern the joint and public worship of God. What is the work or duty of conscience in reference hereunto? Is it not, in the first place, to apply the mind and understanding to consider of what sort it is, in reference unto the future judgment of God? This cannot be denied; the first actings of a man who makes any conscience of what he does, must be of this sort. If then it apprehend it to be such as God will approve of the practice and observation of it at the last day, conscience is satisfied, and reflects no self-condemning thoughts upon its observance. But suppose a man doth not understand it so to be; he cannot conceive it to be appointed so by Christ, nor that any men have warrant, authority, or commission to impose on the practice of others what is not so appointed by him. How shall he do to be otherwise minded? Can he force himself to assent unto that, whereunto in truth he doth not assent? Is it in his power so to do? Ask any man who hath an understanding, whether he can apply it to what he will; that is, to assent or not assent unto what is proposed unto him: all

men will assuredly say, that their assent necessarily followeth the evidence that they have of the truth of any thing, and that otherwise it is not to be obtained. The mind despiseth all violence and coaction from the will; yea, it implies a contradiction that a man should cause himself to assent unto that unto which he doth not assent. Can then other men compel this assent? It is so far otherwise, that God himself will not, yea, be it spoken with reverence of his holiness, cannot, force such an assent, seeing it implies a contradiction; namely, that a man should assent and not assent to the same proposition at the same time. Neither can a man himself force himself, neither can all the men in the world force him, to understand more than he doth understand, or can do so. Men do not seem to have exercised many reflect acts of consideration on themselves, who suppose that they can command their understandings to apprehend what they please, or to assent unto things at their will. These things follow conviction and evidence; and so God himself procures the assent of men unto what he revealeth; and otherwise the understanding is absolutely free from all imposition.

If a man then cannot understand these things to be approved of God, and accepted with him; suppose they are so, yet if a man cannot apprehend them so to be, what is the next work that conscience will apply itself unto? Is it not to declare in the soul, that if it practise these things, God will judge it the last day, and pronounce sentence against him? For conscience, as was said, is a man's judgment of himself and his moral actions, with respect unto the future judgment of God. And I am persuaded that this is the condition of thousands, in reference to the present impositions. Their apprehensions and judgments of themselves in this matter, are to them unavoidable and insuperable. It is not in their power to think otherwise than they do, nor to judge otherwise of themselves in reference unto the practice of the things imposed on them, than they do. Neither can all the men in the world force them to think or judge otherwise. If ever light and evidence unto their conviction of the contrary is imparted to them, or do befall them, they will think and judge according to it; in the mean time, they crave that they may not be forced to act

against their light and consciences, and so unavoidably cast themselves into destruction. All then that some desire of others, is, that they would but give them leave to endeavour to please God; seeing they know it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands as an avenger of sin. God deals not thus with men; for although he requires them to believe whatever he reveals and proposes as an object of faith, and to obey whatever he commands, yet he gives them sufficient evidence for the one, and warranty of his authority in the other; and himself alone is judge of what evidence is so sufficient. But men can do neither of these; they can neither give evidence to their propositions, nor warrant to their authority in their impositions in spiritual things, and yet they exact more than doth God himself. But so it is, when once his throne is invaded, his holiness, wisdom, and clemency are not proposed to be imitated, but a fond abuse of sovereignty alone, is aimed at.

To impose penalties then enforcing men to a compliance and acting in the worship of God, contrary unto what they are convinced in their consciences to be his mind and will, is to endeavour the enforcing of them to reject all respects unto the future judgments of God; which as it is the highest wickedness in them to do, so hath not God authorized any of the sons of men, by any means to endeavour their compulsion unto it. For the former of these, that men may act in the things of God, contrary unto what they are persuaded he requires of them; I suppose none will ever attempt to persuade themselves or others. Atheism will be the end of such an endeavour.

The sole question is, Whether God hath authorized, and doth warrant any man, of what sort soever, to compel others to worship and serve him, contrary to the way and manner that they are in their consciences persuaded that he doth accept and approve. God, indeed, where men are in errors and mistakes about his will and worship, would have them taught and instructed, and sendeth out his own light and truth to guide them, as seemeth good unto him.

But to affirm that he hath authorized men to proceed in the way before mentioned, is to say, that he hath set up an authority against himself, and that which may give control to his.

These things being so, seeing men are bound indispensably not to worship God so as they are convinced and persuaded that he will not be worshipped; and to worship him as he hath appointed and commanded, upon the penalty of answering their neglect and contempt hereof with their everlasting condition at the last day; and seeing God hath not warranted or authorized any man to enforce them to act contrary to their light, and that persuasion of his mind and will which he hath given them in their own consciences; nor to punish them for yielding obedience in spiritual things unto the command of God as his mind is by them apprehended; if the things themselves, though mistaken, are such as no way interfere with the common light of nature or reason of mankind, the fundamental articles of Christian religion, moral honesty, civil society, and public tranquillity; especially if in the things wherein men acting, as is supposed, according to their own light and conscience in difference from others, are of small importance, and such as they probably plead are unduly and ungroundedly imposed on their practice, or prohibited unto them, it remains to be considered whether the grounds and ends proposed in exercise of the severity pleaded for, be agreeable to common rules of prudence, or the state and condition of things in this nation.

The ground which men proceed upon in their resolutions for severity, seems to be, that the church and commonwealth may stand upon the same bottom and foundation; that their interest may be every way the same, of the same breadth and length, and to be mutually narrowed or widened by each other.

The interest of the kingdom they would have to stand upon the bottom of uniformity; so that the government of it should, as to the beneficial ends of government, comprehend them only, whom the church compriseth in its uniformity; and so the kingdom's peace, should be extended only unto them, unto whom the church's peace is extended. Thus they say, that the kingdom and the church, or its present order and establishment, are to be like Hypocrates' twins, not only to be born together, and to die together, but to cry and laugh together, and to be equally affected with their mutual concerns. But these things are evident

mistakes in policy, and such as multiplied experience have evidenced so to be. The comparison of monarchy or the fundamental constitution of the policy and government of this nation, with the present church-order, and state, established on a right, mutable and changeable laws; and which have received many alterations, and may at any time when it seems good to the king and parliament, receive more, is expressive of a principle of so evil an aspect towards the solid foundation of the policy of this nation, as undoubtedly those who are principally concerned in it, are obliged not to admit an avowance of. For whereas it is not the gospel in general, nor Christian religion, or religion considered as it best corresponds with the gospel, or the mind of Christ therein, but the present church-order, rule, and policy that is intended; all men know that it is founded in, and stands solely amongst us, on such laws, as is usual with parliaments to enact in one session, and to repeal in another; or at least to enact in one age, and to repeal in another, according as use and experience manifests them to be conducing or obstructing unto public good. And whereas the constitution of the civil government of the nation, is built upon no such alterable and changeable laws, but hath quite another foundation, obnoxious to nothing, but to the all-overruling providence of the Most High, it is a great shaking and weakening unto its fixation and interest in the minds of men, to have it compared with things every day alterable at pleasure. And the attempt to plant the kingdom's peace on the foundation of the church's uniformity, which may on a thousand occasions wherein the peace of the kingdom itself is not in the least concerned, be narrowed unto a scantling wholly unproportionate unto such a superstruction, is without doubt as great a mistake in government as any persons can fall into. All the world knows, how full at this day it is of various opinions and practices in things concerning religion; and how unsuccessful the attempts of all sorts have been for their extinguishment. It is no less known, as hath in part already been discoursed, how unavoidable unto men, considering the various allotments of their condition in divine providence, their different apprehensions and persuasions about these things are. He therefore that will build the interest

of a nation on a uniformity of sentiment and practices in these things, had need well fix this floating Delos, if he intend not to have his government continually tossed up and down.

The true civil interest of this nation, in the policy, government, and laws thereof, with the benefits and advantages of them, and the obedience that is due unto them, every Englishman is born unto; he falls into it from the womb; it grows up with him, he is indispensably engaged into it, and holds all his temporal concernments by it. He is able also by natural reason to understand it, so far as in point of duty he is concerned, and is not at liberty to dissent from the community. But as for religion, it is the choice of men, and he that chooseth not his religion, hath none. For although it is not of necessity that a man formally chooses a religion, or one way in religion in an opposition unto, and with the rejection of another, yet it is so that he so chooses in opposition to no religion, and with judgment about it, and approbation of that which he doth embrace, which hath the nature of a voluntary choice.

This being the liberty, this the duty of every man, which is, always hath been, and probably always will be, issued in great variety of persuasions, and different apprehensions, to confine the peace and interest of civil societies unto any one of them, seems scarce suitable unto that prudence which is requisite for the steerage of the present state of things in the world. For my part, I can see no reason the civil state hath to expose its peace unto all those uncertain events which this principle will lead unto. And it seems very strange, and I am persuaded that on due consideration it will seem strange that any should continue in desire of confining the bottom of the nation's interest in its rule and peace, unto that uniformity in religion, which as to a firm foundation in the minds and consciences of men, hath discovered itself to be no more diffused amongst the body of the people, than at present it is, and from which such multitudes do, upon grounds to themselves unconquerable, dissent; resolving to continue so doing, whatever they suffer for it; who yet otherwise unanimously acquiesce in the civil government, and are willing to contribute to the utmost

of their endeavours, in their several places, unto its peace and prosperity.

Whatever therefore be the resolution as to a present procedure, I heartily wish that the principle itself might for the future be cast out of the minds of men; that the state and rule of the nation, might not by plausible and specious pretences, suited to the interest of some few men, be rendered obnoxious unto impression from the variety of opinions about things religious, which as far as I see, is like to be continued in the world.

Especially ought this consideration, if I mistake not, be applied unto those differences about which alone this discourse is intended; namely, those which are amongst men of the same religion in all the substantials of it, and which having been of long continuance deduced from one age to another, are greatly diffused, and deeply rooted in the minds of men; being such also, as no countenance can be given to act severely towards them, from any thing in the Scriptures, or practice of the first churches in the world.

And I hope it will never more amongst sober and disengaged persons be said or thought, that the interest of England, or of its rule and government, is in any thing confined unto a precise determination of the differences in the minds and consciences of men, so that those who are of one mind in them, and would impose the apprehension and practice of their persuasion upon others, should be alone comprehended therein.

But let the ground of this severity in proceeding against dissenters be never so weak or infirm, yet if the end proposed in it be accomplished, the counsel will appear at last to have been advisable. What then is the end of these things, of this severity so earnestly pressed after, to be engaged into? Suppose the best appearing success that in this case can be supposed, and all that seems to be desired; namely, that by external force and compulsion, men be brought unto an outward conformity in and unto the things that are imposed on them. This is the utmost of what seems to be desired or aimed at. For no man surely is so vain as to imagine that compulsion and penalties are a means suited to persuade or convince the minds of men.

Nay, commonly it is known, that they have a contrary effect, and do exceedingly confirm men in their own persuasions, and into an alienation from the things they are compelled unto.

Suppose then this end to be obtained; is there better peace or establishment assured to the present church-order thereby, than what it may enjoy whilst men have their liberty to profess their dissent? Both reason and experience do testify the contrary.

Nor will the church find any more dangerous opponents, upon any emergent occasion, than those who have been compelled to uniformity against their conviction. For bearing their condition always as their burden, they will not be wanting unto an opportunity to ease themselves of it.

And it may be sundry persons now vested with ecclesiastical power, if they would recollect their former thoughts and expressions, might remember that they both conceived and declared their mind to this purpose; that former severities in the like kind, were unduly and disadvantageously pursued against that strong inclination in so many unto an indulgence and freedom from their impositions, which surely they cannot think to be now lessened or weakened.

But present power is apt to change the minds of men, and make them neither remember what were their former apprehensions, nor foresee what would be their thoughts upon a disappointment in their present undertakings.

But neither yet can this rationally be supposed; nor is it probable in the least, that the outward conformity intended, will ever be obtained by rigour; especially where the reasons of it are so remote from the influencing the consciences of men. For whatever arguments may be used for a restraint to be put upon conscience, in things concerning faith and the worship of God, which must be taken from the nature of the things themselves, are utterly superseded and made useless, by the nature of the differences that are in contest between the imposers, and those that deprecate their impositions. For as very little hath been done, especially of late, to prove the lawfulness of the things imposed, nothing at all to assert their necessity; so the nature of the things themselves, about which the difference is, quite casts them out of the compass and reach of those ar-

guments which are pleaded in the case of coercion and penalties in the things of religion or the worship of God. For if men should be able to prove that heresies and idolatries are to be punished in the persons of them that do assert them; no conclusion will or can be thence made, as I suppose, for their punishment and ruin, who by the confession of them that would punish them, are neither heretics nor idolaters.

Force must stand alone in this case; and what small influence it is like to have on the practices of men, when it hath no pretence to reason or judgment, wherein conscience is concerned to give its countenance, is not uneasy to determine. Nay, experience hath sufficiently in most places baffled this attempt; violence hath been used in matters of religion to the shame and stain of Christianity; and yet never succeeded any where, to extinguish that persuasion and opinion which it was designed to extirpate.

It may be, for awhile indeed, and sometimes it may obtain such success, as to seem to have effected the end aimed at. But still within a short space, mostly in the compass of the same age, it hath been manifest, that it hath but laid in provision for future troubles, oppositions, and animosities.

Let the prelates or rulers, therefore, of the church advise, press unto, and exercise this severity whilst they please. They may as evidently see the issue of it, as if it were already accomplished. Some may be ruined, multitudes provoked, the trade of the nation obstructed, some few be enforced unto an hypocritical compliance with what is against the light of their consciences, compassion be stirred up in the residue of the people for innocent sufferers, and by all indignation against themselves and their ways increased, considering what are the things about which these differences are, how deeply rooted a dissent from the present establishment is in the minds of multitudes; for how long a season that persuasion hath been delivered down unto them, even ever since the first reformation, gradually increasing in its suffrage to this day; the advantages that it hath had for its growth and improvement, with successes evidently suitable unto them; and resolution that men's spirits are raised unto, to suffer and forego the utmost of their earthly concernments, rather than to live and die in an

open rebellion to the commanding light of God in their consciences: it is the utmost vanity to have other expectations of the end of such a course of rigour and prosecution.

In the mean time, I am sure whoever gets by persecution, the king loseth by it.

For what if some officers of ecclesiastical courts have been enriched by the booty they got from dissenters? What advantage is it all this while to the kingdom, when so many families are impoverished, so many ruined, as are by excommunications and imprisonments ensuing thereon, so many more discouraged from the exercise of their faculties, or improvement of their stocks, so many driven beyond the seas; and yet all this nothing, unto what in the same kind must and will ensue, if the course sometimes begun should be pursued? To me it seems that an attempt for the pretended conformity (for attained it will never be), is scarce a due compensation for his majesty's loss in the diminishing of his subjects and their wealth, wherewith it is and will be certainly attended. Besides, to ruin men in all their substantials of body and life, for ceremonies, and those our own countrymen and neighbours, seems to carry with it somewhat of that severity which Englishmen, after the subsiding of the impetuous impressions of provocations, do naturally abhor, and will not long by any means give countenance unto.

On the consideration of these things, and other doubtless of more deep investigation, his majesty hath often declared, not only his resolution to grant the indulgence intimated in his gracious declaration to that purpose, but also the exceeding suitableness of these intentions unto his own inclinations and clemency. The advantages which have already ensued unto the nation, in the expectation of indulgence have been also remembered, and repeated by him with an uncontrollable manifestation of its conducibleness for the future, unto the peace and prosperity of the kingdom. And it seems very strange, that so noble and royal dispositions, such thoughts and counsels of wisdom and authority, such projections of care and solicitude for the kingdom's good, should be all sacrificed to the interest of any one party of men whatsoever.

I cannot but hope, that his majesty will reassume those

blessed counsels of peace; especially considering that the spirits of men are singularly disposed to receive and put a due valuation upon the execution of them. For all those who desiring an indulgence, though differing amongst themselves in some things, do jointly cast their expectations and desires into a dependance on his majesty, with advice of his parliament.

And as notwithstanding their mutual differences, they are united in this expectation, so may they be made partakers of it. Although in other things their differences continue, they cannot but agree in loyalty and gratitude: when the denial of it unto them, although they still differ in other things, will reconcile their minds in regret against the impositions they jointly undergo.

And, whereas men have by the fears, dangers, and sufferings which they have passed through, evidenced to all the world, that the liberty and freedom of their consciences is of more consideration with them, than all other things whatever; and have learned themselves also how to esteem and value that liberty, without which they are sensible how miserable their condition is, and is like to be, it is impossible that any strange obligation unto peaceableness, loyalty, and thankfulness, can be put upon the subjects of any nation, than a grant of the indulgence desired would put upon multitudes in this. This would set their minds at liberty from fears and contrivances for the avoidance of impendent dangers; encourage them to engage the utmost of their endeavours and abilities in the businesses of peace and security, leaving them no fears, but only of any disturbance of the state of things, which hath secured unto them all their principal interests in the world.

And how foolish, senseless, and unbecoming of men, would any other thoughts be? To think, that men who have given this evidence at least, that they are such as exercise a good conscience towards God and others, in that they have suffered for it, and are ready yet farther so to do, should not despise and contemn all suggestions of unpeaceable dispositions, or should suppose that they have any community of interest with such as being not concerned in conscience with them; at least not so far as to evidence it to be their chief and principal interest, as theirs it is; or to have any

inclination to the disturbance of the public tranquillity, wherein all their desires and aims are secured; is to judge by such imaginations of folly, madness, and wickedness, as those who use these pretences, would be loath to be judged by, although they have not given that testimony of their respects unto conscience which the others have done.

And hereby, whereas the parliament have been necessitated through the exigence of the public affairs, to engage the nation in payments not passed through without difficulty, they will, as was said, put a real and effectual obligation upon great multitudes of men, without the least semblance of disadvantage unto any others.

Neither is this a matter of any expense, but only of generous clemency in themselves, and the deposition of wrath, envy, and revenge, in some few others; things that may be parted withal, without the least detriment unto human society. And, as it is in the matter alone of indulgence and conscience, wherein the people are capable of a sensible obligation, others not concerned therein being apt to think that all which is done for them is but their due, and less sometimes than is so; those partakers of it, by an avowment of the favour received, will be in their own minds indispensably bound to promote the common interest of public good.

It is true, indeed, that the parliament have thought meet some years past to direct unto another course of procedure: but, 'Dies diem docet.'

And wise men are never wont pertinaciously to adhere unto the pursuit of conjectures and projections about future events; such as former laws were suited unto, against experience, and those second thoughts which a new consideration of things may suggest unto them: besides the alterations of affairs in many concernments, may fully justify the alteration in resolutions pleaded for; which is not such neither, as to be contradictory unto any thing already established, but what may be brought into compliance with it, and subordination to it. They may say of what is past, as was by one said of old;

Res duræ et regni novitas me talia cogunt.

The present assurance of public peace and tranquillity

admits of counsels impartially tending to the good of all, uninfluenced by a mixture of fears and jealousies.

But suppose the peace and prosperity of the nation to be much secured and advantaged by an indulgence, as undoubtedly under the protection and blessing of God it will be, yet I have heard some say, and it is commonly pleaded, that the church will not be able to keep its station, or to retain its members in compliance; but they will many, if not most of them, make use of the liberty desired, especially if it be for and unto Protestants, which must be prevented. Now this I confess seems strange to me, that any such events should be feared or expected.

Those who make this objection, suppose the church to be really possessed of truth and order in the matters that are in difference; they express every day not only the great sense they have of the learning, ability, and piety of the clergy, but are ready on all occasions to contemn their adversaries, as men unlearned, weak, and inconsiderate. It is also granted, that all outward privileges, encouragements, advantages, promotions, preferments, dignities, public conveniencies, legal maintenance, are still to be confined unto the church, and its conformists; as also that those who desire the benefit of indulgence, must, together with an exemption from all these, pay all dues required by the law to them; and if they will join themselves unto others, besides a deprivation of the great conveniencies of their usual places of assemblies, and their legal interest in them, and the inconveniencies of repairing unto other assemblies, it may be far remote from their habitations, contribute also to the maintenance of their teachers where it is indispensably needed.

If I say, all these and the like considerations, with a reputation of public favour and regard with authority, be not sufficient to preserve and secure the church in its station, and its members in the communion of it, it is evident that they are things which have no foundation in the consciences or minds of men, but stand merely on the props of law and power: which, if true, is yet a secret which ought not to be divulged.

I confess chief-justice Hobart, in his Reports, in the case of Colt and the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, says, 'That though it be 'de jure divino,' that Christian people

be provided of Christian officers and duties, as of teaching, administration of the sacraments, and the like, and of pastors for that purpose; and therefore to debar them wholly of it, were expressly against the law of God, yet all other things,' as he there shews, 'are not so: for,' saith he, 'we know well that the primitive church in her greatest purity, were but voluntary congregations of believers, submitting themselves to the apostles, and after to other pastors, to whom they did minister of their temporals, as God did move them.' A liberty for which state is pleaded for, the thing itself being owned to be according to the pattern of the primitive church in her greatest purity.

And if it be so as he speaks, all other orders and observances in the church must be built only on law and custom. But yet such is their force also on the minds of men, that as attended with the advantages and conveniences before mentioned, and fenced by the inconveniences and disadvantages which attend dissenters; the differences also contended about being of no more weight than they are, there is no doubt but the most of men, at least to the full as many as without force to conscience, will do so under the severest penalties to the contrary, will continue their adherence to the present church-state, although the liberty of the dissent desired should be indulged.

It may be this suggestion of peace and moderation may not have an equal relish unto all palates, nor find like reception in the minds of all. The interest of some, and the prejudices of others, are so important with them, as that they cannot attend unto impartial reason in this matter. I am persuaded that some have scarce any better or more forcible argument, to satisfy their own minds that they are in the right in religion, than the inclination they find in themselves to hate and persecute them whom they suppose to be in the wrong; or at least that they can no longer believe that to be truth which they profess, than whilst they are willing and ready to destroy with violence that which is contrary unto it. For what is forborn, they suppose must needs be approved; all which are so palpable misapprehensions, as there needs no endeavour to lay them open.

It is far enough from being an evidence of truth in any,

that they are ready to destroy them that are otherwise minded. It is error and superstition, which being conscious of their own weakness are impatient until their contraries are ruined. And never are there such mutual violences in matters of religion, as where the several opposite parties are all of them most grossly erroneous and superstitious.

The Egyptians were of old the scorn and sport of the world for their devotions in general; oxen, apes, crocodiles, garlick, and onions, being some of the best of their deities: and yet about these they had amongst themselves such endless animosities, and mutual persecutions of one another, as can scarcely be paralleled. So he tells us:

> Immortale odium et nunquam sanabile bellum,
> Ardet adhuc ombos et Tentyra; summus utrinque,
> Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
> Odit uterque locus.

And what was the ground and occasion of the quarrel?

> Crocodilon odorat
> Pars hæc, illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.

Their controversy was about the worship of a crocodile on the one hand, and of a fowl that devoured serpents on the other.

Neither is the difference of much more importance, or managed with much more moderation, which is at this day between the Turks and Persians, about the true successors of Mahomet.

So little reason have men to please themselves with a surmise of being possessed of the truth, by the inclination that they find in themselves to persecute the contrary; seeing such an inclination is an inseparable companion of error and superstition, and is generally heightened to cruelty and revenge, according as men by them are drenched in folly and blindness.

It is yet pretended by some, that such a toleration as will satisfy them that desire it, and secure the public tranquillity, however it may please in the notion of it, will yet be found impracticable when it comes to be examined and instanced.

But it is evident that these pretences must be countenanced by some peculiar consideration of this nation and government thereof, seeing the utmost of what is here desired, is both established and practised in other nations.

The whole of it is plainly exercised in the kingdom of France, where the Protestants paying all duties to the church, sustaining all burdens and offices in the commonwealth equal with others, are freed from ecclesiastical courts, censures, and offices, and all penalties for their dissent, with an allowance for the worship of God in their own assemblies provided by themselves, and known to the magistrates under whose jurisdiction they are; which is the sum of all that is here desired. The like liberty, if I mistake not, is granted to the French and Dutch churches here in England. The United Provinces of the Netherlands have continued in the same practice ever since the reformation; so also hath the kingdom of Poland, where the dissenters are both numerous and divided among themselves. Lutherans are tolerated in the dominions of the Palsgrave, elector of Brandenburg, and landgrave of Hessia: so are Calvinists in many free cities of the empire, in some places of the kingdom of Denmark; and both Lutherans and Calvinists in the sundry principalities in Germany, whose magistrates are of the Romish religion. In the hereditary dominions of the emperor, wherever difference in religion once made an entrance, either a forbearance and toleration is granted and continued, as in Hungary, or the countries themselves have been made utterly waste and desolate, as Bohemia and Moravia, and yet in a great measure continue so to be. The attempts of the duke of Savoy against it have been condemned, detested, and abhorred, by all princes of the same religion with himself, and yet have ended in some tolerable forbearance. It is also known, that the kings of England have by virtue of their power in things ecclesiastical, in all ages as occasion required, and as they saw meet, exempted persons and societies from the common and ordinary course and way of church discipline and inspection.

Certainly, therefore, the unpracticableness of such an indulgence lies in the desires of them whose interest, as they apprehend, is opposite unto it: although it is more probable, that their moderation known and declared in this matter, would give them a greater interest in public esteem and veneration, than by any other ways they are like to obtain. Neither is this at all by wise men to be despised, who

are able to foresee the probable events of continued exasperation. Why then should men pretend, that that cannot be done, which hath been done and is done at this day in so many kingdoms and nations, with the wished-for success by peace and happiness?

And as it may be very few instances can be given of such severity against dissenters, who come up to so full an agreement in all material things with them from whom they dissent, as that of late practised and still pressed for in England; so it will be found, that whether we respect the nature and temper of the people of this land, or the admission of the principles of dissent, with the grounds of them, in multitudes, or the resolution to undergo all difficulties and sufferings, rather than to transgress against the light of their consciences, or their valuation of forbearance above all secular things whatever; there is no nation under heaven wherein such an indulgence or toleration as is desired would be more welcome, useful, acceptable, or more subservient to tranquillity, trade, wealth, and peace.

A

PEACE-OFFERING,

IN

AN APOLOGY AND HUMBLE PLEA

FOR

INDULGENCE

AND

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE:

BY SUNDRY PROTESTANTS
DIFFERING IN SOME THINGS FROM THE PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT
ABOUT THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

Ambigua de religione capita quæ plurimum habere videntur obscuritatis, tantis tamdiu animis decertata, apud sapientes hoc fere certum reliquerunt, nusquam minus invenîri veritatem, quam ubi cogitur assensus.—Hugo Grotius.

Exiguam sedem sacris littusque rogamus
Innocuum, et cunctis undamque, auramque patentem.

A

PEACE-OFFERING,

&c. &c.

The infinitely wise and holy God, who disposeth of all things according to the counsel of his own will, having designed our portion in the world unto the latter days thereof; wherein, besides those difficulties which in all ages attend them who are called unto the search and profession of the truths of the gospel, we are forewarned of sundry evils peculiar unto them, rendering them perilous: as it is our duty to apply ourselves to serve his good pleasure in our generation, without repining at that station which in his work he hath allotted unto us; so also diligently to take care that we add not unto the evils of the days wherein we live; and that, what we may be called to suffer in them according to his will, may not be lost unto his holy ends and purposes in the world, but some way or other redound unto his glory. What shall befall us in the course of our pilgrimage, how we shall be disposed of, as to our outward temporary concernments, as it is not in our power to order and determine, so neither ought to be in our care, so as that we should be anxiously solicitous thereabouts: all things of that nature belong unto his sovereign pleasure, who will make them work together for good to them that love him. Resting in his will as to our outward state and condition in this world, with that of the times and seasons wherein our lot is fallen, which he hath put in his own power, we shall endeavour, in reference thereunto, to possess our souls in patience, waiting for that day which 'shall manifest every man's work of what sort it is.' And we know that it is but yet a little while, before it will be no grief of heart unto us, for to have done or suffered any thing for the name of the Lord Jesus, according to his mind and will. For whereas we are well assured, that the

old enemy of mankind who is sometimes awake and sowing of tares whilst men sleep, is never so far asleep, whilst any are endeavouring to sow the good seed of the gospel, as not to stir up an opposition to their work, and to labour the ruin of their persons; so we believe that every sincere endeavour to promote the holy truths and ways of God, according to that measure of light which he is pleased graciously to impart unto any of the sons of men, is accepted and owned by him 'who is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;' which is sufficient to secure their peace and consolation, under all the evils that on the account of their work they may conflict withal. Neither is it a small alleviation of any trouble that we may be exposed unto, that no pretence, colour, reason, or arguings for our sufferings, no means, ways, or kinds of them, no ends unto them, can possibly be invented, proposed, pursued, but what we are fully forwarned of; that so we might not at any time think ourselves surprised, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. This then is our great concernment in the profession of religion, this that which we ought principally to attend unto, namely, to commend our consciences unto God, that in all sincerity and godly simplicity, we exercise ourselves in the work that he calls us unto, not corrupting his word, or staining our profession by a conversation unbecoming the holiness of the gospel; and for what may outwardly befall us, though producing heaviness and sorrow for a season, the last day will manifest to have been unspeakably more the concernment of other men than our own. It is therefore on this account, and that duty which we owe unto all the sons of men, especially those who in any place or degree have rule and disposal of us in this world, and the things thereof committed unto them, that notwithstanding the hazard that attends us in the discharge of every duty of this kind, we adventure to represent our condition and desires unto all that endeavour to follow after truth with peace. For as the minds of men are capable of no greater perfection than what consists in receiving the whole truths of the gospel, nor their souls of greater blessedness than attends obedience thereunto; so every mistake of it, every prejudice against it, every opposition unto it, or any part of it, are not only in themselves a corruption and debasement of the mind, but are usually at-

tended with consequents of greater evils, in and unto them by whom they are entertained. And this condition oftentimes are men, otherwise upright and wise, cast into, either by their own ingrafted prejudices, or neglect of that severe disquisition after truth, which all the sons of it are obliged unto, or by suffering themselves to be imposed on, by the suggestions of others, who perhaps sacrifice their actings in and about the things of God, to some secular (and it may be very corrupt) ends of their own. Hence truth and innocence, which cannot be oppressed but when clothed with misrepresentations and calumnies, have in all ages been forced to suffer the sad effects of their mistakes, who in the mean time professed highly an avowment of them. So in particular, the foundation of all the miseries that ever befell the professors of the truth of Christ, since the day that the name of Christian was known in the world, and consequently of all that evil and confusion in the earth which the lusts of men have produced, and the righteous judgment of God inflicted, have lain in general, either in the ignorance of men, of the genuine nature and tendency of the truth itself, or in their credulity, in giving credit unto those misrepresentations of it, which it hath always been the interest of many in the world, to frame and promote. Hence the professors of Christianity, and every particular way therein, in their respective seasons and generations, have esteemed it their duty, not only unto themselves, to wave their imminent sufferings, if it were the will of God thereby, but unto others also, whom they judged to be engaged against God and his truth, in their persecution of them, to declare freely and fully what it was that they did believe and practise ; and therein plead the equity and reasonableness of that deliverance which they aimed at ; of themselves from suffering, and of others from sinning. And herein had they before their eyes, the examples of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who with various success did ofttimes make use of the like defensatives of himself and his doctrine. Nor is it the last prescription of the law of nature implanted in the heart of man by him that made it, that innocency should so far undertake its own protection and security, as to endeavour a removal of prejudicate imputations out of the minds of them, in whose judgment it is concerned. And this law all men univer-

sally yield obedience unto, who intend not to abuse such imputations unto sinister ends, not suitable unto the innocency they profess, and so by deserting their own unblamable defence, contract a guilt rendering them incapable of it for the future. Whereas therefore it hath pleased him in whose hand our life and breath, and all our ways are, to place us in that condition, wherein by the apprehensions he hath given us of his mind and will, in some things relating unto his worship, we are forced to differ from others, we conceive it our duty, for the prevention of farther evils, openly and candidly to declare both what we profess, and what in all humility we desire thereupon: and we cannot but hope, that when the matters of our difference are known and considered, that they will not be judged of so high a demerit, as to render a modest peaceable desire of indulgence in our adherence unto them, a new addition of guilt. For their case is miserable indeed, who being prejudged into a condition of sufferings, though not convinced of evil, may not desire relief from those who alone are able to afford it; that also being made an aggravation of their misery, by being made an aggravation of their supposed guilt.

And in particular, this course is made at this season necessary unto us, from the exasperation of the minds of many, in reference unto what we possess and desire, with the prejudices that are taken up and improved unto our disadvantage and trouble; for although we have with the joint consent of all our churches, some years since, publicly declared what is the faith which we profess, and the way of the worship of God wherein we walk, and did hope that it would not be looked on as an unseasonable expectation that our confession might have received a Christian, charitable, sedate consideration, before it were condemned, or those that adhere unto it judged as evil-doers for their so doing; yet considering the sad exasperations of the minds of men, though upon occasions wholly foreign to the matter of our faith and profession, we cannot be without some apprehensions that far the greatest part of those who are loudest in their cries for severity against us, have scarce been so faithful to Christian candour and ingenuity, as seriously to examine whether there be in what we believe and practise, a just foundation for that kind of proceeding and

acting towards us, which they so earnestly desire to engage our rulers unto. If for no other reason, then, but to endeavour to call off the thoughts of men from persons, and personal provocations, unto those things which are the pretended foundation of their actings, and with reference whereunto their account must be made at the last day, when other men's real or apprehended miscarriages will give no countenance to theirs, we cannot but judge it a duty incumbent on us, to remind them what the things are which must give construction unto all that in this matter they shall undertake or perform; and whereunto, under all imputations whatever of things of other natures, our comfort, be it what it will, true or false, in all our sufferings that we may be called unto, is resolved. And we do know, that they will one day find themselves under a woful mistake, who suppose that their severity against us will be any farther justified, than there is ground for it in the principles which we profess in the things of God; and this cannot but be evident unto them (if they will give themselves but the liberty of unprejudiced consideration) who know that a relinquishment of those principles would instantly cause all those other pleas and pretences to vanish out of their minds, which at present they only make use of. And therefore, also, shall we not much concern ourselves in any other charge that is laid against us, but only as to what we profess and practise in the ways and worship of God, as knowing that from thence alone, all occasion is taken for them. We shall therefore only briefly declare our sense of them, and then proceed to that which is our real concernment. For there is not any new thing herein under the sun.

In all ages, wherever any way in religion, hath been judged by the most, rightly or otherwise, to be contrary to the mind of God, as by them apprehended, it hath been immediately charged with the guilt of all the evils that fell out in the days of its profession, though evidently they had other causes and occasions. Such was the condition of Christianity in general of old; as is manifest from the apologetical writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Arnobius, Cyprian, Lactantius, Minucius Fœlix, Augustine, and others. Upon every occasion of trouble, the common cry was 'Christianos ad Leones.' Such was the condition of the professors

of the Protestant religion, upon the first reformation, throughout the world; under which prejudice and imputation, they are yet forced to suffer the wrath of men in many places. Whatever disadvantages, then, on this account we may be exposed unto, we have no reason to complain or think strange of, it being no other than all men in the like condition in all ages have had to conflict withal; and will have so, whilst sin and darkness continue in the world. To commend our consciences unto God in well doing, is the only means of peace in ourselves, and the whole defensative in reference unto others, which in this cause is left unto us.

Moreover if any who either really make profession of any way in religion, or are generally esteemed so to do, fall into personal crimes and miscarriages, which no way can secure itself against, men justly provoked thereby, have scarce the patience to attend unto any plea for the way itself, or those who peaceably and innocently walk therein, though the charge against it be altogether groundless and unreasonable. Thus the abominations of the Gnostics of old were charged upon the whole body of Christianity; and the unwarrantable zeal of one man in firing a temple in the kingdom of Persia, reflected an imputation of sedition on all the professors of the gospel, to their extirpation out of that empire. But the unrighteousness of this charge is, we hope, evident even to themselves, who would fain make use of it unto our disadvantage; for no society in the world can give security for the deportment of all individuals belonging unto it, according unto the rules of the whole; and if they may be charged with such miscarriages, it were easy to demonstrate, that no community, no profession of men in the world, no order, no way can be acquitted from guilt, or thought meet to have moderation exercised towards it. Besides, we know not in particular, but that all occasions of reflecting upon our societies on this account, have by the goodness of God been prevented; for which we are humbly thankful unto his holy Majesty. But if to accuse be enough to render any men nocent, none can be long innocent. Thyestæan banquets, promiscuous lusts, and incests, must on that ground be thought to be the ends of the primitive assemblies of Christians. If men will take to themselves the liberty of entertaining evil and groundless surmises, it is

impossible for us, or any living, to set bounds to their imaginations. So that we have nothing in this case to do, but to leave the authors of such false and calumnious insinuations unto that reward, which God and their own consciences will not suffer them to lose; and our vindication unto the providence of God, over our present and future deportment. It may be thought of nearer concernment unto us, when the late troubles in these nations are objected, and the remembrance of them renewed unto our prejudice. But whether the frequent and importunate urging of them, since by his majesty's clemency and grace they are put into legal oblivion for ever, do tend unto the composure and settlement of the minds of men, which is certainly the duty of all good subjects to aim at, we leave it unto the consideration of those who are wiser than we, and on whom the care of the peace and welfare of the kingdom is in an especial manner incumbent. For our own parts, we shall only say, that whereas they were neither begun, nor carried on, upon the account of that way in the worship of God which we profess; may the remembrance of them be never so severely revived, we cannot fear any just conclusion from thence, unto a suspicion of troubles of the like nature for the future; as well knowing the absolute freedom of our principles from any such tendency, as well as the providential unravelling of all those interwoven interests and occasions, which individual persons countenanced themselves withal, in their engagements in them.

Magistracy we own, as the ordinance of God, and his majesty as the person set over us by his providence, in the chief and royal administration thereof: in submission unto him, we profess it our duty to regulate our obedience by the laws and customs over which he presides in the government of these nations. So that our practical adherence unto our own avowed principles, is all that in this matter can fall under the most suspicious and charitable surmise. That there is any means of giving such absolute satisfaction concerning future events, which depend on the minds and wills of men, as to leave all suspicion concerning them impossible, we know not; much less to prevent some men's pretending suspicions for ends best known unto themselves. But this we know, that what ways or means soever are warranted, or es-

tablished by the laws of this land, or may be so, and they are such as mankind must content themselves withal, as incapable of farther or greater assurance; or whatever else may be rationally and justly expected from us; we have given, and are ready to give security by, against the evils intimated in this charge upon us; which being the utmost that our duty calls upon us for, we hope we shall not always suffer for being the unhappy objects of some men's groundless jealousies, which for us to remove is altogether impossible, God himself having not appointed any way or means for us to use to that end or purpose.

As then neither we nor others can hinder men from making use of this pretence, for some ends of their own (though we know, as it is used by them, it contributes nothing to public tranquillity, and the composure of the minds of men), so we hope that God will so far in his good time clear up the innocency and sincerity of our intentions, and their suitableness unto our declared principles, that no just occasion of reproach be administered unto them who wait for advantages against us.

And what are we, that public disturbance should be feared from us? 'Nec pondera rerum, nec momenta sumus.' By what way or means, were we never so desirous, could we contribute any thing thereunto? What designs are we capable of? What interest have we to pursue? What assistance to expect or look after? What title to pretend? What hopes of success? What reward of any hazard to be undergone? We have no form of government, civil or ecclesiastical, to impose on the nation; lay no pretence unto power to be exercised on the persons of any of his majesty's subjects; have no expectations from persons or nations, that might induce us to further or promote any sinister aims of other men: the utmost of our aim is but to pass the residue of our pilgrimage in peace, serving God in the way of our devotion: we covet no men's silver or their gold, their places or preferments; our whole desire is that of Israel of old to their brother Edom; 'Let us pass, we pray, through the country; we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand, nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.' May we

thus far prevail, under the protection of God's providence, his majesty's favour, and our own innocency, we have no principles, we shall have no reason, farther to trouble ourselves or others. If it be denied unto us, and we must yet be scattered over the face of the earth, we shall yet pray for the prosperity of his majesty, and the land of our nativity, patiently bearing the indignation of the Lord, against whom we have sinned, and waiting for his salvation.

That which of late is principally urged unto our prejudice, is the prohibition of that way of worship which we desire to walk in, and the establishment of another by law, to whose authority we owe subjection. When this begins once to be pleaded, the real merits of the cause in debate is usually overseen, and the obedience required by law is only insisted on; as though that were grown a civil difference by the interposition of a law, which before was purely religious. This Paul himself found to be one of the most difficult cases he had to contend withal; it was objected unto him, that he taught 'customs which it was not lawful for to do among the Romans;' Acts xvi. 21. All that doctrine which he had to declare, was antecedently in general forbidden by law; it being determined by the Romans, that no worship of God should be admitted amongst them, not established by public authority. And had not the light and truth of Christianity broken through that opposition, it must have lain shut up in darkness to this day. For our parts, we have only this to say, that there is no reason to urge this as a peculiar objection against us, it being the only foundation of all others; and only occasion of the difference about which we treat. Had not a law enjoined the practice of some things in the worship of God, which according unto our present light we cannot assent unto, without ceasing to worship him (for to worship him in our own thoughts, against his mind and will, is to profane his name and worship); had it not forbidden the exercise and discharge of some duties which we account ourselves obliged unto by the authority of God himself, we had had no need to implore the clemency of our governors to relieve us against that severity which we fear. This then we acknowledge; but withal, to state this difference upon its right foundation, do solemnly in all sincerity

protest before God, his holy angels, and all the world, that it is not out of any unwarrantable obstinacy that we are conscious of unto ourselves, nor from any disaffection unto, or dissatisfaction in, the government that God hath set over us; but merely from a sense of that account which we have one day to make before Jesus Christ the judge of all, that we cannot yield that compliance unto the act for uniformity which it requireth of us. The case, then, notwithstanding this prejudice, is still the same; conscience towards God in the things of his own worship, is still and alone concerned; whatever other pretences and reasonings may in this case be made use of (as many are, and ever were in the like cases, and will so be). The whole real cause of that severity which we humbly deprecate, and only reason lying against the indulgence we desire, is our profession and practice in the things that are not of this world, but purely relating to the revelation of the mind and worship of God. Whatever therefore men may plead, pretend, or urge, of another nature, we are so far conscious unto our own integrity, as to be fully satisfied in our minds, that whatever dangers we may be in this matter exposed unto, or whatever we may be called to suffer, it is all merely for believing in God, and worshipping of him, according to what he hath been pleased to reveal of his mind unto us. And as in this case it is not in the power of any of the sons of men to deprive us of that consolation which an apprehension of the truth will afford unto them that sincerely and conscientiously embrace it; so whether any men can commend their consciences to God according to the rules of the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in our molestation and trouble, we leave it unto all unprejudiced men to judge. And that we may yet farther remove all grounds of mistake, and obviate all other pretences against us, we shall candidly declare the general principles both of our faith and worship, and then leave our condition, whatever it may be, to the judgment of him, who 'hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' of his majesty whom he hath set over us in supreme power, and of all other persons whatever, who have any sense of the terror of the Lord, the account we must make of serving him according to what he is pleased

to reveal of himself unto us, the nature of things known only by divine revelation, or of the infirm frail condition of mankind in this world.

For the faith which we profess, and which we desire to walk according unto, we need not insist upon the particular heads of it, having some years since in our confessions publicly declared it, with the joint consent of all our churches; neither do we own or avow any doctrine, but what is therein asserted and discharged. And we hope it will not be looked upon as an unreasonable request, if we humbly desire, that it may receive a Christian, charitable, sedate consideration, before it be condemned. May we be convinced of any thing therein, not agreeable unto the Scriptures, not taught and revealed in them, we shall be with the first in its rejection. That this hath been by any as yet attempted, we know not; and yet we are judged, censured, and reproached upon the account of it. So far are men degenerated from that frame of spirit, which was in the Christians of old; so far have they relinquished the ways wherein they walked towards those who dissented from them.

Nor do we decline the judgment of the primitive church; being fully satisfied, that what we teach and adhere unto, is as consonant unto the doctrine thereof, as that of any church at this day in the world. The four first general councils, as to what was determined in them in matters of faith, are confirmed by law in this nation; which is all that from antiquity hath any peculiar stamp of authority put upon it amongst us; this also we willingly admit of, and fully assert in our confession. Neither doth the addition of ours disturb the harmony that is in the confessions of the reformed churches, being in all material points the same with them, and no otherwise differing from any of them in things of less importance, than as they do one from another; and as all confessions have done, since the first introduction of their use into the churches of God. That which amongst them is of most special regard and consideration unto us, is that of the church of England, declared in the Articles of religion: and herein in particular, what is purely doctrinal, we fully embrace and constantly adhere unto. And though we shall not compare ourselves with others, in ability to assert, teach, and maintain it; yet we cannot, whilst we are con-

scious unto ourselves of our integrity in our cordial adherence unto it, but bear with regret the clamorous accusations of some against us, for departing from the church of England, who have not given that testimony of their adherence unto its doctrine, which we have done, and by the help of God shall continue to do. It is true, indeed, there are some enlargements in our confession of the things delivered in the thirty-nine Articles; some additions of things not expressly contained in them, which we were necessitated unto, for the full declaration of our minds, and to obviate that obloquy which otherwise we might have been exposed unto, as reserving our judgment in matters that had received great public debate since the composure of those Articles: but yet we are fully persuaded, that there is not any proposition in our whole confession, which is repugnant unto any thing contained in the Articles, or is not by just consequence deducible from them. Neither were we the authors of the explanations or enlargements mentioned; there being nothing contained in them, but what we have learned and been instructed in from the writings of the most famous divines of this nation, bishops and others, ever since the reformation; which being published by legal authority, have been always esteemed, both at home and abroad, faithfully to represent the doctrine of the church of England. We have no new faith to declare, no new doctrine to teach, no private opinions to divulge; no point or truth do we profess, no not one, which hath not been declared, taught, divulged, and esteemed as the common doctrine of the church of England ever since the reformation.

If then we evince not the faith we profess to be consonant unto the Scriptures, the doctrine of the primitive church, of the four first general councils, the confessions of the reformed churches beyond the seas, and that in particular of the church of England, we shall acknowledge the condition of things in reference unto that liberty which we humbly desire, to be otherwise stated than hitherto we have apprehended. But if this be the condition of our profession, as we hope it is manifest unto all unprejudiced and ingenuous persons to be, who esteem it their duty not to judge a matter of so great importance before they hear it, we can hardly think that they give up themselves to the conduct of the

meek and Holy Spirit of Christ, who are ready to breathe out extirpation against us, as to our interest in this world, for the profession of those principles in the things of God, which they pretend to build their own interests upon for another.

The nonconformity then that we may be charged with, being very remote from a dissent unto that doctrine which is here publicly avowed, and confirmed by law, it cannot but seem strange unto us, that any should endeavour to cast us under the same severity with them who utterly renounce it; and would entail upon their posterity, on the forfeiture of all their public rights, as Englishmen, and benefit of their private estates, not only an adherence unto the Protestant religion, but a precise and determinate judgment and practice in things of very little concernment therein; and of none at all, as to public tranquillity.

Would it not seem strange, that a man might at as easy and cheap a rate, renounce the Protestant profession, and the fundamental doctrines of the church of England, in things indispensably necessary to salvation, as to be mistaken, or suspend his assent about things dark and disputable in their own nature, and of very small importance, which way soever they are determined? So that men in the embracing or refusal of them, rebel not against that commanding light of God set up in their hearts to rule them in his name, in that apprehension which they have of the revelation of his will, which is unto them of great and eternal moment.

They are then only things relating unto outward order and worship, wherein our dissent from the present establishment of religion doth consist; things about which there hath been variety of judgment, and difference in practice, from the days of the apostles, and probably will be so until the end of the world: for we find by experience, that the late expedient for the ending of differences about them, by vindicating of them into the arbitrary disposal of every church, or those that preside therein, in whose determinations all persons are to acquiesce; is so far from accomplishing the work whereunto it is designed, that it contributes largely to their increase and perpetuation. Our only guilt then is, our not agreeing with others in those things wherein there never yet was an agreement among Christians: nor, perhaps, had they

all that frame of spirit in moderation and mutual forbearance which the gospel requireth in them, would it ever be any way needful that there should so be.

For our parts, about these things we judge not other men, nor do, or ever did, seek to impose our apprehensions on their judgments or practice. What in them is agreeable unto truth, God knows, and will one day declare. Unto our present light in the revelation of his will must our practice be conformed; unless to please men, and secure our transitory perishing concernments, we intend to break his bonds and cast away his cords from us.

And that it may the better appear what is both our judgment and practice in and about these things; unto what we have declared in the close of our confession (which we suppose they cannot reasonably and with satisfaction to their own consciences, wholly overlook, who because thereof, are ready to reflect with severe thoughts upon us), we shall now only add the general principles whereunto all that we profess or practise in these things, is resolved. And of them we humbly desire that a Christian and candid consideration may be had: as supposing that to pass a sentence of condemnation against us for our dissent unto any thing, without a previous weighing of the reasons of that dissent, is scarce suitable unto that law whereby we are men, and engaged into civil societies. As then religion is publicly received and established in this nation, there are many outward concernments of it, relating unto persons and things, that are disposed and regulated by and according to the laws thereof: such is that which is called power ecclesiastical, or authority to dispose of those affairs of the church with coercive jurisdiction, which relates to the outward public concernments of it, and the legal interests of men in them. This we acknowledge and own to be vested in the supreme magistrate, the king's majesty, who is the fountain and spring of all jurisdiction in his own kingdoms whatever. No power can be put forth or exercised towards any of his subjects, which in the manner or nature of its exertion hath the force of a law, sentence, or jurisdiction; or which, as to the effect of it, reacheth their bodies, estates, or liberties, but what is derived from him, and binding formally on that sole reason, and no otherwise.

Hence we have no principle in the least seducing us to transgress against any of those laws which in former days were looked on as safe preservatives of the Protestant religion and interest in this nation. Did we assert a foreign power over his majesty's subjects, and claim an obedience from them in some such cases as might at our pleasure be extended to the whole that is due unto him; did we, or any of us, by virtue of any office we hold in the church of God, claim and exercise a jurisdiction over the persons of his majesty's subjects in form and course of law; or did we so much as pretend unto the exercise of any spiritual power that should produce effects on the outward man; we might well fear, lest just offence should be taken against us. But whereas the way wherein we worship God is utterly unconcerned in these things, and we willingly profess the spring of all outward coercive jurisdiction to be in the person of the king's majesty alone, without the least intermixture of any other power of the same kind, directly or by consequence; we cannot but say with confidence, that it will be utterly impossible to convince us, that on this account we are offenders.

For the worship of God and order therein (which is purely spiritual and evangelical), we acknowledge indeed the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only institutor or author of it, and the holy Scripture the only principle revealing, the only rule to judge of it, and to square it by. It is not now our design to plead the truth of this principle, nor yet to clear it from mistakes, or vindicate it from opposition: all which are done elsewhere. Let it be supposed to be an error or mistake, which is the worst that can be supposed of it, we must needs say, that it is an error which hath so much seeming countenance given unto it by innumerable places of Scripture, and by so many testimonies of the ancient and modern doctors of the church, and is every way so free from the production of any consequent of evil importance; that if there be any failure of the minds of men, in and about the things of God, which from a common sense of the frailty of human nature may rationally expect forbearance and pardon from them, who have the happiness to be from all miscarriage, of that kind (if any such there be), this may claim a share and interest among them.

Nor are we able as yet to discern, how any acceptable account can be given to the Lord Jesus, at the last day, of severity against this principle, or those that, otherwise inoffensive, walk according to the light of it.

Moreover, whereas principles true in themselves may in their application unto practice be pressed to give countenance unto that which directly they lead not unto; we have the advantage yet farther particularly to declare, that in the pursuit of it in the worship of God we have no other ordinances or administrations, but what are owned by the law and church of England. Now whatever other occasion may be sought against us (which we pray God not to lay to their charge who delight in such practices), we know full well that we differ in nothing from the whole form of religion established in England, but only in some few things in outward worship, wherein we cannot consent without the renunciation of this principle, of whose falsehood we are not convinced. This being our only crime, if it be a crime, this the only mistake that we are charged with, in the things of God; we yet hope that sober men will not judge it of so high a demerit, as to be offended with our humble desire of indulgence, and a share in that princely favour towards persons of tender consciences, which his majesty hath often declared his inclinations for.

We confess that oftentimes, when such dissents are made a crime, they are quickly esteemed the greatest, yea, almost all that is criminal: but whether such a judgment owes not itself more to passion, prejudice, and private interest, than to right reason, is not hard to determine.

For our parts, as we said before, they are no great things which we desire for ourselves; the utmost of our aim being to pass the remainder of the few days of our pilgrimage in the land of our nativity, serving the Lord according to what he hath been pleased to reveal of his mind and will unto us. And we suppose that those who are forward in suggesting counsels to the contrary, know not well how to countervail the king's damage.

That this our desire is neither unreasonable nor unjust; that it containeth nothing contrary to the will of God, the practice of the church of old, or to the disadvantage of the public tranquillity of these nations: but that all outward

violence and severity on the account of our dissent is destitute of any firm foundation in Scripture, reason, or the present juncture of affairs amongst us, we humbly crave liberty in the farther pursuit of our own just defence, briefly to declare and evidence.

The great fundamental law amongst men, from which all others spring, and whereby they ought to be regulated, is that law of nature, by which they are disposed unto civil society, for the good of the whole and every individual member thereof. And this good being of the greatest importance unto all, doth unspeakably out-balance those inconveniences which may befall any of them through a restriction put upon them by the particular laws and bonds of the society wherein they are engaged. It is impossible, but that sundry persons might honestly improve many things unto their advantage in the increase of their interest in things of this world, were not bounds set unto their endeavours, by the laws of the community whereof they are members. But whereas no security may be obtained that they shall not have their particular limits and concernments broken in upon by a hand of violence and injustice, but in a pursuit of that principle of nature which directs them to the only remedy of that evil in civil society, they are all in general willing to forego their particular advantages, for that which gives them assurance and peace in all that they are, and enjoy besides. All such conveniences, therefore, as consist in the things that are within the power of men, and are inferior to that good and advantage which public society doth afford, the law of nature directing men, and their chiefest good, commands them as occasion requires, to forbear and quit. Nor can any community be established, without obedience unto that command. But of the things that are not within the power of men, there is another reason. If the law of society did require that all men engaging thereunto should be of one stature and form of visage, or should have the same measure of intellectual abilities, or the same conception of all objects of a rational understanding, it were utterly impossible that any community should ever be raised among the sons of men.

As then all inconveniences, yea, and mischiefs relating unto things within the power of men, are to be undergone

and borne with, that are less than the evils which nothing but political societies can prevent for the sake thereof; so the allowance of those differences which are inseparable from the nature of man, as diversified in individuals, and insuperable unto any of their endeavours, is supposed in the principles of its being and constitution. Yea, this is one principle of the law of nature, to which we owe the benefits of human conversation, and administration of justice, that those differences amongst men which unto them are absolutely unavoidable, and therefore in themselves not intrenching upon, nor disannulling the good of the whole (for nature doth not interfere with itself), should be forborn and allowed among them, seeing an endeavour for the extinguishment must irresistably extinguish the community itself, as taking away the main supposal on which it is founded. And in that harmony which by an answerableness of one thing unto another, rising from such differences, doth the chiefest glory and beauty of civil society consist; the several particulars of it also being rendered useful unto the whole thereby. Of this nature are the things concerning which we discourse. They relate, as is confessed, unto things spiritual and supernatural: that the will of God in these things cannot be known but by revelation from himself, all men will acknowledge; and we suppose they will with no less readiness consent, that divine revelation cannot be apprehended or assented unto, but according to the nature and measure of that light, which God is pleased to communicate unto them unto whom such revelation is made: that this light doth so equally affect the minds of all men, or that it is possible it should do so, considering the divers ways and means of its communication, with the different dispositions of them that receive it; that they should all have the same apprehensions of the things proposed unto them, none will judge, but such as take up their profession in these things on custom, prejudice, or interest. It will then hence evidently follow, that men's apprehensions of things spiritual and supernatural, such we mean as have no alliance unto the ingrafted light of nature, are not absolutely under their own power, nor depend on the liberty of their wills, whereunto all law is given. And therefore is the diversity in and about them to be reckoned among these unavoidable differences which are supposed in the law

of civil society, and without which supposal every attempt for any such society, would be destructive of itself. Among these apprehensions, and the exercise of our consciences towards God upon them, lies all the difference from the present establishment, which we desire an indulgence to be shewed towards; not at all questioning but that it is lawful for them who have attained unto an agreement in them, so far as they have attained, to confirm and strengthen that agreement among themselves, and render it desirable unto others, by all such ways and means as by right and the laws of the society whereof they are, they make use of.

And it is, as we humbly conceive, in vain pretended, that it is not the apprehensions of men's minds, and their consciences unto God upon them, but only their outward actings that fall under the penalties desired by some to be indispensably imposed on dissenters from the established form; seeing those penalties are not only annexed unto actions which such apprehensions require as duties unto God, but also unto a not acting contrary unto them, which directly and immediately reflect on the mind and conscience itself: other ways to reach the consciences of their brethren, it is utterly impossible to find out. And to teach men that their consciences towards God are not concerned either in not acting according to their light in his worship, or in acting against it, is to teach them to be atheists.

We cannot therefore but hope, that our distance from the present establishment, in some few things relating unto supernatural revelation (especially whilst in our agreement with it there is a salve for all things in the least intrenching on the light of nature, and all things whatever, that even of revelation itself, are necessary to the grand end of it, with security against any thing that may any way incommode public tranquillity), being unto us insuperable, and therefore provided for by the fundamental law of all civil societies, that it will not always receive so severe a construction as to deprive us of the good and benefit thereof. For to annex penalties, which in the progress will deprive men of all those advantages in their outward concernments which public society doth or can afford unto these differences, without a supposition whereof, and a provision for, there could be no such so-

ciety at all, is to destroy that whose good and preservation is intended.

And therefore the different conceptions of the minds of men in the things under consideration, with actings consonant unto them, being not only an unavoidable consequent of nature's constant production of the race of mankind, in that various diversity which in all instances we behold, but also rendered farther insuperable, from the nature of the things themselves about which they are exercised (being of divine revelation), they were ever in the world esteemed without the line of civil coercion and punishment, until it came to be the interest of some to offer violence to those principles of reason in themselves, which any outward alteration in the state of things is capable of rendering their own best protection and defence.

And on these grounds it is, that force never yet attained, or long kept that in religion which it aimed at.

And the great Roman historian tells us, that it is 'indecorum principi attrectare, quod non obtineat;' no way honourable unto a sovereign prince, to attempt that which will never be accomplished.

But because what may seem obscure in this reason of things, and principles of community (which usually affect them only who, without interest or prejudice, give up themselves to the conduct of rational and sedate consideration, with which sort of persons alone, we have not to deal), is exemplified in the gospel, whose furtherance is on all hands pretended; we shall thence also briefly manifest, that the way pretended for the promotion of its interest, by severity in external penalties, on the account of such differences as we are concerned in, is both opposite unto the spirit of its author, and contrary to the rules of it, with the practice of those who have walked according to them.

As among the many blessed ends of the conversation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, it was not of the least moment, that he might set us a pattern, and give us an example of that frame of heart and holiness of life, whereby we may become like unto our heavenly Father, and be acceptable before him; so in his carrying on of that design, there was not any thing that he more emphatically called upon his

disciples to endeavour a conformity unto him in, than in his meekness, lowliness, gentleness, and tenderness towards all. These he took all occasions for our good to shew forth in himself, and to commend unto others. Whatever provocation he met withal, whatever injurious opposition he was exposed unto, he did not contend, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard with strife or anger. The sins of men, indeed, he reproved with all authority; their groundless traditions in the worship of God, he rejected; their errors he refuted by the word; but to the persons of men he was always meek and tender, as coming to save, and not to destroy; to keep alive, and not to kill. In the things of man, he referred all unto the just authority and righteous laws of men; but in the things of God, never gave the least intimation of severity but only in his holy threats of future evil in the world to come, upon men's final impenitency and unbelief. Coerce, fine, imprison, banish, those that apprehend not aright all and every thing that I would have them instructed in, are words that never proceeded out of his holy mouth, things that never entered into his gracious heart. And we are persuaded, that it is a thing of marvellous difficulty, for any man seriously to think, that he who was and is so full of compassion towards all the sons of men, even the worst of them, should ever give the least consent unto the punishment and gradual destruction of those who in sincerity desire to love and obey him, and do yet unavoidably mistake in their apprehensions of some few things, pleaded to be according to his mind, their love and obedience unto him thereby being no whit impeached. When some of his disciples of old, in zeal, as they pretended, unto himself, and the truths preached by him, would have called for fire from heaven on those who had contumeliously slighted him upon a supposed diversity in religion, for which they thought themselves warranted, though falsely, by a precedent out of the Old Testament; he lets them know, that it was an unacquaintedness with their own spirits, causing them to imagine that to be zeal for the truth, which was indeed but self-revenge and private interest, which had caused them to speak so unadvisedly.

Now that the same mind might be in us that was in Jesus Christ, that his example is to be a rule unto us, that we ought all to be baptized into the same Spirit with him; that

what from his frame of heart and actings, as revealed in his word, we can rationally conclude that he would approve or disallow, we ought to square our proceedings and judgments unto, none that own his name can deny.

And if men would not stifle, but suffer themselves to be guided by the power of their convictions, they would quickly perceive how inconsistent with it, are their thoughts of rigour and severity towards those which differ from them in some few things relating to the mind of God in and about his worship.

Certainly this readiness of servants, who are themselves pardoned talents, to fall with violence on their fellows (upon the account of his service, though otherwise it may be poor and despicable in the world) for lesser debts, and those only supposed, not proved real, will appear at the last day not to have been so acceptable unto him, as some men on grounds and pretences, utterly foreign unto this whole business, are willing now to persuade themselves that it is. Would men in these things, which are principally his, and not their own concernments, but as his, labour to be always clothed with his spirit, and do nothing but what they can rationally satisfy themselves that he himself would do in like case; there would be an end not only of this debate, but of many other mischiefs also, which the Christian world is at this present day pestered withal; and it must needs seem strange, that men can persuade themselves that they do that for Christ which they cannot once think or imagine that he would do himself. Certainly, setting aside provocations and prejudices, any man who hath read the gospel, and gives any credit unto it, is a competent judge, whether external force in these things, do more answer the spirit of Christ, or that from which he suffered.

But we have not only his heart and actings for our example, but his word also, as revealed by himself and his apostles, as our rule in his matter.

With nothing more doth it abound, as to our duty in this world, than with precepts for, and exhortation unto, mutual forbearance of one another in our mistakes and failings. And although there be force and light enough, in its general rules, to guide us in all particulars, yet, lest any should imagine that the cause under consideration, about different ap-

prehensions and practices in something relating to the worship of God, might be exempted from them, even that also is variously instanced in, and confirmed by examples approved by himself. The great apostle, who gives us that general rule, that we 'should walk together in one mind,' so far as we have attained, and for other things of difference, wait for the revelation of the mind of God unto them that differ, Phil. iii. 15, 16. everywhere applies his own rule unto the great difference that was in those days, and long after, between the Jewish and Gentile believers. The one continued under a supposal of an obligation to the observation of Mosaical rites and ceremonies, from which the other was instructed that they were set at liberty. This difference, as is the manner among the sons of men, wrought various jealousies between them, with disputes and censurings of each other; whereof the apostle gives us a particular account, especially in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. xiv. xv. Neither did they rest here; but those of the circumcision everywhere kept their assemblies and worship distinct from the congregations of the Gentile believers: hence in most places of note, there were two churches, one of the Jews, and another of the Gentiles, walking at peace in the faith of the gospel, but differing as to some ceremonial observances. The whole society of the apostles, observing their difference, to prevent any evil consequent, in their assembly at Jerusalem, assigned to the several parties their particular bounds, how far they should accommodate themselves unto one another by a mutual condescension; that they might walk in love and peace, as to what remained of difference among them. The Jews are taught by them not to impose their rites and ceremonies on the Gentiles; and the Gentiles to abstain from some things for a season, whereunto their liberty did extend, whereby the other were principally provoked.

Their bounds being so fixed, and their general duty stated, both parties were left at liberty, as to their practice in the thing, wherein they could not yet be reconciled. And in that different practice did they continue for many years, until the occasion of their division was, by the providence of God in the destruction of the Judaical church, utterly taken away.

These were the rules they proceeded by, this their course and practice, who unquestionably under the Lord Jesus were intrusted with supreme authority over the whole church, of that kind which is not transmitted unto any of the sons of men after the ceasing of their office and work, and were guided infallibly in all their determinations. Coercions, restraints, corporal punishments, were far from their thoughts; yea, the very exercise of any ecclesiastical power against them who dissented from what they knew to be truth, so that in general they were sound in the faith, and walked in their lives as became the gospel.

And whereas they sometimes carry the matter to a supposal of disobedience unto those important things which they taught and commanded in the name of their Lord and Master, and thereupon proceeded to denounce threatenings against the disobedient, they expressly disclaim all thoughts of proceeding against them, or any power or warrant from Christ committed unto them, or any others, or that afterwards in his providence should so be, so to do with external carnal force and penalties; avowing their authority over all that was ever to be put forth in things of that nature, to be spiritual, and in a spiritual manner only to be exercised; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

And because the church might not seem to be disadvantaged by this disclaimer of power externally to coerce such as received not the truth that it embraced, and to be cast into a worse condition than that of the Jews which went before, whose ordinances being carnal were established and vindicated by carnal power, St. Paul lets them know that this alteration is for the better; and the coercion of miscarriages under the gospel, by threatenings of the future judgment which would have a special respect unto them, more weighty than the severest penalties that were appointed by Moses's law; Heb. x. 28—30.

Not that lesser differences in apprehensions of the mind of God in his word, had any punishment assigned unto them under the Old Testament, whose penalties concerned them only who turned away to the worship of any other god but the God of Israel (and such no man pleads for): but that the whole nature of the ordinances and worship of the church being changed from carnal and

earthly to heavenly and spiritual, so also are the laws of rewards and punishments annexed unto them. These were the rules, this the practice in this case, of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: these rules, this practice hath he recorded in his word for our instruction and direction.

Might all those who profess obedience unto his name be prevailed on to regulate their judgments by them, and square their proceedings unto them, the church of God would have peace, and the work of God be effectually carried on in the world as in the days of old. And for our parts, we will never open our mouths to deprecate any severity that may be warranted from the gospel or apostolical direction and practice, against any mistake of that importance in the things of God, as our principles and ways may rationally be supposed to be: for although we are persuaded that what we profess and practise is according unto the mind of Christ, yet because it is our lot and portion to have our governors and rulers otherwise minded, we are contented to be dealt withal so, as the blessed gospel will warrant any to deal with them who are so far in the wrong as we are supposed to be. And if herein we cannot prevail, we shall labour to possess our souls in patience, and to commit our cause to him that judgeth righteously.

This we know, that the judgment and practice of the first churches, after the days of the apostles, was conform to the rules and examples that by them were given unto them. Differences in external rites of worship which were found amongst them, where the substance of faith was preserved, they looked upon as no breach of union at all. A long catalogue of such differences as were from time immemorial amongst them, is given us by Socrates the historian. And he who first disturbed the peace of the churches about them, by dividing their communion (Victor of Rome), is left branded upon record, with the censures of the principal persons for learning and holiness throughout the world in those days. Nor is our dissent from the present establishment of any larger extent, than such as the general consent of all the first churches extended the bond of their communion unto.

Impositions of things indifferent, with subscriptions to precise determinations on points doubtful and ambiguous

with confinements of men's practices in all outward ceremonies and circumstances of worship, were things not born in the world for some hundreds of years after the first planting of churches. Origen, in his third book against Celsus, pleads expressly, that there ever were differences amongst professors of Christianity from the beginning; and that it was impossible but that there should so be, which yet he shews hindered not their faith, love, and obedience. Justin Martyr, in his second Apology, declares his forbearance, and the churches of those days, towards those who, though believing in Christ, yet thought themselves obliged to the observation of Mosaical rites and ceremonies, provided that they did not impose the practice of them upon others. Ignatius, before them, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, professeth, 'that to persecute men on the account of God or religion, is to make ourselves conformable to the heathen that know not God.' Tertullian, Origen, Arnobius, and Lactantius, openly pleaded for a liberty in religion, as founded in the law of nature, and the inconsistence of faith with compulsion, in that extent which we aim not at. The synod of Alexandria, in the case of Athanasius, condemns all external force in religion, and reproached the Arians as the first inventors and promoters of it.

It is indeed pleaded by some, that the Christians of those days had reason to assert this liberty, because there was then no Christian magistrate who might make use of the civil sword in their behalf, or for the punishment of dissenters from them, and that this was the reason of their so doing.

But the dishonesty of this pretence is notorious. They affirm directly, that no force, coercion, or restraint, is to be used in or about the worship of God, nor outward power in a way of penalties to be exercised over the consciences of men herein.

To say they thus pleaded and pretended merely to serve their own present condition and occasion, but that upon the alteration of things they would be otherwise minded, is calumniously to reflect upon those holy witnesses of Christ, the guilt of the highest hypocrisy imaginable: and men cannot invent a more effectual means to cast contempt on all religion, and to root a due sense of it out of the world,

than by fomenting such imaginations. Let them therefore rest in peace under that reputation of holiness and sincerity which they justly deserve, whatever be the issue of things with us, or those which may suffer with us in the like condition.

But neither were they alone; the great Constantine himself, the first Christian magistrate with supreme power, by a public edict declared, 'That the liberty of worship was not to be denied unto any.' And, until the latter end of his reign, there were no thoughts of exercising severity, with reference unto any divisions amongst Christians about the worship of God.

After the rise of the Arian heresy, when the interposition of civil censures upon the account of difference about things spiritual, had made an entrance by the solicitations of some zealous persons for the banishment of Arius, and some of his co-partners, it is not easy to relate what miseries and confusions were brought upon the churches thereby. Imprisonments, banishments, and ruin of churches, make up much of the ecclesiastical history of those days.

After awhile, Arius is recalled from banishment, and Athanasius driven into it. In a short tract of time, Arianism itself got the civil sword in many places, wherewith it raged against all the orthodox professors of the Deity of the Son of God, as the synod of Alexandria complains.

Much they suffered in the days of Constantius, unto whom the words of Hilary in this case are worthy consideration: 'Let,' saith he, 'your clemency take care and order, that the presidents of the provinces look to public civil affairs, which alone are committed to them, but not meddle in things of religion.' And again, 'Let your gentleness suffer the people to hear them teaching whom they desire, whom they think well of, whom they choose. God teacheth, rather than by force exacteth, the knowledge of himself; and ascertaining the authority of his commands by works of power, despiseth all compelled confession of him.' If force be used to compel men unto the true faith, the bishops that profess it would interpose, and say, God is the God of the whole world, he needs no compelled obedience, nor requires any such confession of him. He is not to be de-

ceived, but to be well pleased. Whence is it, then, that persons are taught how to worship God by bonds and perils?' These are the words of Hilary.

But the same persons suffered more during the reign of Valens, who was dissuaded from cruelty against the Christians by Themistius, a pagan philosopher, on the principles of common reason and honesty; plainly telling him, that by the way he used, he might force some to venerate his imperial robes, but never any one to worship God aright.

But the best emperors in the mean time bewailed those fierce animosities, whereby every sect and party laboured to oppress their adversaries, according as they had obtained an interest in imperial favour, and kept themselves from putting forth their authority against any dissenters in Christian religion, who retained the foundation of the faith in any competent measure. Valentinianus, by public decree, granted liberty of religion unto all Christians, as Sozomen testifies, lib. 6. Ammianus Marcellinus, in his History, observes the same. Gratian made a law that religion should be free to all sorts and sects of Christians, except the Manichees, Eunomians, and Photinians; and that they should have their meetings free; as both Socrates and Sozomen acquaint us.

Neither have they been without their followers in those ages wherein the differences about religion have risen to as great a height as they are capable of in this world.

Nor will posterity be ever able to take off the lasting blot from the honour of Sigismund the emperor, who suffered himself to be imposed upon by the council of Constance, to break his word of safety and liberty, to John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

And what did Charles the Fifth obtain, by filling the world with blood and uproars, for the extirpation of protestantism? Notwithstanding all his victories and successes, which for awhile smiled upon him, his whole design ended in loss and disappointment.

Ferdinand, his brother and successor, made wise by his example, kept constant the peace of the empire, by a constant peace granted to the consciences of men.

His son Maximilian continually professed, that the empire of conscience belonged unto God alone, wherein he would never interpose. And upon the return of Henry the

Third of France out of Poland, he gave him that advice to this purpose, which it had been happy for that prince, if he had understood and followed, before he came to die. But then even he also, having the severe instruction given him of his own experience, left that as his last advice to his counsellors, that they should no more with force interpose in the matters of religion.

Rodulphus, who succeeded Maximilian, by the same means for a long time preserved the peace of the empire. And after he had by the persuasions of some, whose interest it was so to persuade him, interdicted the Protestants in Bohemia the use of their religion, upon the tidings of a defeat given to his forces in Hungary by the Turks, he instantly replied, 'I looked for no other issue, since I invaded the throne of God, imposing on the conscience of men:' and therefore granted them their former liberty.

Doth not all the world behold the contrary issue of the wars in France, and those in the United Provinces, begun and carried on on the same account? The great Henry of France winding up all the differences thereof, by granting liberty to the Hugonots, laid a firm foundation of the future peace and present greatness of that kingdom. Whereas the cruelty of the duke D'Alva and his successors, implacably pursuing the Netherlands to ruin on the same account, hath ended in the utter loss of sundry provinces, as to the rule and authority that he and they endeavoured absolutely to enthrone, and rendered the rest of them scarce worth the keeping.

The world is full of instances of the like kind.

On the other hand, when by the crafty artifices and carnal interests of some, the principles of external coercion for lesser differences in the matters of Christian religion came to be enthroned, and obtained place in the imperial constitutions and laws of other kingdoms, the main use that was made of it was to drive truth and the purity of the gospel out of the world, and to force all men to centre in a profession and worship, framed to the interest of some few men, who made no small advantage of it.

According as the power and purity of religion decayed, so did this persuasion get ground in the minds of men, until it became almost all the religion that was in the world. That

those who submitted not unto the dictates of them who by various ways obtained a mixture of power, civil and ecclesiastical, into their hands, should be destroyed and rooted out of the earth.

This apostacy from the spirit, principles, rules, and commands of the gospel, this open contradiction to the practice of the apostles, their successors, first churches, best and wisest emperors, attended with the woful consequents that have ensued thereon, in the ruin of souls, proscriptions of the truth, martyrdom of thousands and ten thousands, commotions of nations, and the destruction of many of them, we hope will not be revived in these days of knowledge, and near approach of the Judge of all.

We trust that it will not be thought unequal, if we appeal from the example of the professors of Christianity under its woful degeneracy, unto the first institution and public instance of its profession: especially being encouraged by the judgment, example, and practice of many wise and mighty monarchs in these latter days.

The case is the same as it was of old; no new pretences are made use of, no arguments pleaded, for the introduction of severity, but such as have been pretended at all times by those who were in possession of power, when they had a mind to ruin any that dissented from them.

That the end of their conventicles was for sin and uncleanness; that the permission of them was against the rules of policy, and laws of the empire; that they were seminaries of sedition; that God was displeased with the confusion in religions introduced by them; that errors and misapprehensions of God were nourished in them; that they disturbed the union, peace, and love, that ought to be maintained among mankind; that they proceeded upon principles of pride, singularity, faction, and disobedience unto superiors; was from the first entrance of Christianity into the world, charged on the professors of it.

The same arguments and considerations are constantly still made use of, and insisted on, by all men that intend severity towards them that differ from them.

And they are such as will evidently serve alike any party or persuasion, that in any place, at any time, shall be accompanied with power: and so have been oftener managed in the

hands of error, superstition, and heresy, than of truth and sobriety.

Wherefore the bishop of Rome, observing the unreasonableness of destroying mankind upon such loose principles and pretences as are indifferently suited unto the interest and cause of all who have power to make use of them, because they all suppose the thing in question, namely, that they who enjoyed power, did also enjoy the truth; found out a way to appropriate the whole advantageof them to himself, as having attained the ascription of an infallibility unto him, in determining what is the truth in all things, where men do or may differ about religion or the worship of God.

This being once admitted and established, there seems great force in the foregoing pleas and reasonings; and no great danger in acting suitably unto them, but that the admission of it is more pernicious unto religion, than all the consequents which it pretends to obviate. But where this infallible determination is disclaimed, to proceed unto outward punishment for such conceptions of men's minds and consciences in the things of God, as he is pleased to impart unto them, which may be true and according to his will, upon reasons and pretences, invented originally for the service of error, and made use of for the most part unto that purpose, being more fit for that work than for a contribution of any assistance unto truth, is that which we know not how men can commend their consciences unto God in. Besides, what is it that is aimed at by this external coercion and punishment? that all men may be of one mind in the matter of the worship of God, a thing that never was, nor ever will be by that means effected in this world, for neither is it absolutely possible in itself, neither is the means suited to the procurement of it, so far as it is possible. But when neither the reason of the thing itself will convince, nor the constant experience of so many ages, it is in vain for any to contend withal.

In the mean time we know, that the most of them who agreed together to press for severity against us for dissenting from them, do differ among themselves in the things of far greater importance in the doctrine of the gospel than those are wherein we differ from them; whence it must needs be evident to all what is the ground of their zeal in reference unto us and others.

But all these considerations are quickly in the thoughts of some removed out of the way, by pretences that the indulgence and liberty desired will certainly produce all sorts of evils both in religion itself, and in the civil state, which being mentioned before in general, shall now be a little farther considered; for this is principally, if not solely pleaded for the refusal and the rejection of them; neither doth this course of procedure seem to be unwisely fixed upon, by those who suppose it to be their interest to manage their opposition unto such an indulgence, wherein yet we hope they will at length discover their mistake.

For whereas the arguments to be in this case insisted on consist merely in conjectures, jealousies, and suppositions of what may come to pass, none knows when or where, it is easy for any to dilate upon them at their pleasure; nor is it possible for any to give satisfaction to all that men may conjecture or pretend to fear. Suppose all things that are evil, horrid, pernicious to truth and mankind, and when they are sufficiently aggravated, affirm that they will ensue upon this forbearance, which that all or any of them will so do, no man can tell, and this design is satisfied. But it is sufficiently evident that they are all false or mistaken suppositions, that can give countenance unto these pretences.

For either it must be pretended, that truth and order, which those who make use of these reasonings suppose themselves possessed of, have lost the power and efficacy of preserving themselves, and of preventing the evils summoned up to be represented as the consequents of indulgence without external force and coercion, which they have had sometimes and elsewhere; or that they indeed have all actually followed and ensued upon such indulgence, in all times and places. The latter of these is so notoriously contradicted by the experience of the whole world, especially of sundry kingdoms and dominions in Europe, as France, Germany, Poland, and others, that it may not hope for admittance with the most obnoxious credulity. For the former, it is most certain that the truth of the gospel did never so prevail in the world, as when there was a full liberty as unto civil punishments granted unto persons to dissent in it and about it.

And if that which is now so called, continueth not to have

the same effect, it may justly be feared that it is not indeed what it is called, or that it is not managed in a due manner. It is then altogether uncertain that upon the indulgences desired, such variety of opinions will ensue as is pretended, and unquestionably certain, that all such as produce practices contrary to civil society, moral honesty, or the light of nature, ought in all instances of them to be restrained. For the conscience of a man can dictate no such thing unto him, there being an inconsistency in them with that supreme light which rules in conscience, whilst it may be so called. And it is a hard thing to ruin multitudes at present sober and honest, lest by not doing so, some one or other may prove brainsick, frantic, or vicious, who also may be easily restrained when they appear so to be.

And moderate liberty will certainly appear to be religious security in this matter, if the power of it, as well as the profession be regarded. For it is the interest of them who plead for indulgence, to watch and contend against error and heresy, no less than theirs by whom it is opposed. For professing all material truths with them, they are not to be supposed to value or esteem them less than they. And it may be, it will appear, that they have endeavoured as much their suppression in the way warranted by the gospel, as those who profess such fears of their increase.

They are Protestants only of whom we speak, and to suppose that they will not do their utmost for the opposing of the rise, growth, or progress of whatever is contrary to that religion which they profess, or that their interest therein is of less concernment unto them than that of others from whom they differ, is but a groundless surmise.

But it is yet farther objected, that indulgence desired hath an inconsistency with public peace and tranquillity, the other head of the general accusation before mentioned. Many fears and suspicions are mustered up, to contribute assistance unto this objection also. For we are in the field of surmises, which is endless and boundless. Unto such as make use of these pretences we can truly say, that might we by any means be convinced of the truth of this suggestion, we should not only desist from our present supplications, but speedily renounce those very principles which necessitate thereunto. For we assuredly know, that no divine truth, nothing really

relating unto the worship of God, can cause or occasion any civil disturbance, unless they arise from corrupt affections in them that profess it, or in them that oppose it. And as we shall labour to free ourselves from them on the one hand, so it is our desire and prayer, that others may do so also on the other, which will give sufficient assurance to tranquillity. But we are moreover wholly freed from any concernment in this objection, in that, he who is undoubtedly the best and most competent judge of what will contribute to the peace of the kingdom, and what is inconsistent therewith, and who is incomparably most concerned in the one or the other, even the king's majesty himself, hath frequently declared his royal intentions for the granting of the indulgence desired, who would never have been induced thereunto, had he not perfectly understood its consistency with the peace and welfare of the kingdom. And as our confidence in those royal declarations hath not hitherto been weakened by the interveniency of so many occasions as have cast us under another condition, so we hope that our peaceable deportment hath in some measure contributed, in the thoughts of prudent men, unto the facilitating of their accomplishment. And as this will be to the lasting renown of his majesty, so it will appear to be the most suitable unto the present state of things in this nation, both with respect unto itself and the nations that are round about us. And we think it our duty to pray, that his majesty may acquire those glories in his reign, which none of his subjects may have cause to mourn for; and such will be the effect of clemency and righteousness.

We find it indeed still pretended, that the allowance of meeting for the worship of God, however ordered and bounded, will be a means to procure and further sedition in the commonwealth, and to advantage men in the pursuit of designs to the disturbance of the kingdom. But it were equal that it should be proved, that those who desire this indulgence have such inclinations and designs, before such pretences be admitted as of any force. For our parts, we expect no liberty, but from his majesty's favour and authority, with the concurrence of the parliament, which when we have obtained (as at no time, whatever our condition be, have we the least thoughts or inclinations into any sedition or public disturbance), so having an obligation upon us in the things

of our greatest interest in this world, we know not from what sort or party of men, more cordial adherence unto and defence of public peace and tranquillity, can justly be expected. For where there are more causes and reasons of compliance and acquiescency, than there are on the contrary, it is rationally to be supposed that they will prevail. And to surmise the acting of multitudes contrary to their own interests, and acknowledged obligation of favour, is to take away all assurance out of human affairs.

Neither is there any colour of sound reason in what is pretended, of the advantage that any may have to promote seditious designs by the meetings of the dissenters pleaded for in the worship of God. For doubtless the public peace will never be hazarded by such designs, whilst they are managed by none, but such as think to promote and carry them on, in assemblies of promiscuous multitudes of men, women, and children; unknown too for the most part unto themselves, and to one another. But these things are spoken because they have been wonted so to be; other considerations to confirm them are none. Conscience, interest, sense of obligations, the only safe rules amongst men to judge by of future events, all plead an expectation of the highest tranquillity in the minds and spirits of men, upon the indulgence desired.

And there lies a ready security, against the pretended fears of the contrivance of sedition in assemblies of men women and children, strangers to one another in a great measure, by commanding all meetings to be disposed in such a way, as that they may be exposed to all, and be under the constant inspection of authority.

As for other courses of severity, with respect to the peace and prosperity of the kingdom, it may not be amiss a little to consider who and what are the dissenters from the present establishment. For the persons themselves, they are mostly of that sort and condition of men in the commonwealth, upon whose industry and endeavours in their several ways and callings, the trade and wealth of the nation doth much depend. And what advantage it will be to the kingdom to break in upon them unto their discouragement, fear, or ruin, we suppose no man can divine. Those who think there are enough for the work without them, and that their exclu-

sion will make room for others, do gratify indeed thereby some particular persons, intent upon their own private advantages, which they would willingly advance in the ruin of their neighbours; but scarce seem to have taken a right measure of the state of the whole. For whereas it may be sometimes, there may in some places be too many of them who manage the affairs of trade and commerce, when their concerns are drawn unto a head, and a readiness for their last exchange that there should be so of those that do dispose and prepare things also, to bring them unto that condition, is impossible. It cannot then be, but that the continuance of so great fears and discouragements upon men, as those which their dissent from the established way of worship doth at present cast upon them, must of necessity weaken the nation, in that part of it wherein its principal strength doth lie. Neither are they a few only who will be found to be concerned in this matter, which is not to be despised. Pliny, a wise counsellor, writing to Trajan, a wise and renowned emperor, about Christians who were then the objects of the public hatred of the world, desires his advice upon the account of their numbers, not that they were to be feared, but unmeet to be punished; unless he intended to lay the empire waste:

'Visa enim est mihi res digna consultatione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum; multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis utriusque sexus, etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabantur; neque enim civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est.'

So then they termed Christian religion; for the multitude would still keep the name of truth and religion to themselves: the oppressed, the lesser number must bear the name or title, which they consent or conspire to cast upon them. But the thing itself, as to the persons at present dissenting from the established form, is not unduly expressed. And as it will be an act of royal clemency, and like to the work of God himself, to free at once so great multitudes of all ages, sexes, and conditions, from the fears and dangers of those evils, which they are fully satisfied they do not deserve; so any other way of quitting the governors of this nation, from those uneasy thoughts, which an apprehension of such an effect of their rule upon multitudes

of subjects must needs produce, will be very difficult, if not impossible. Shall the course begun in severity against them, be pursued? What generous spirits employed in the execution of it, can but be weary at last with undoing and ruining families, of those persons, whom they find to live peaceably in subjection to the government of the nation, and usefully amongst their neighbours, merely because they dare not sin against God, in transgressing against that persuasion concerning his will and worship, which he hath given unto them? For they cannot but at last consider, that no man erreth willingly, or believes any thing against his light, or hath other thoughts of God and his worship, than what he apprehends to be from himself; or that any duty is accepted of God, which springs from compulsion. How much more noble and honourable will they discern the work of relieving men sober and peaceable in distress, to be, than to have the complaints, and tears, and ruin of innocent men and their families, continually reflecting themselves on their minds? Nor is there any probability of success in this procedure; for as time hath always made for rule, and encouragements which are solely in the power of rulers have effected great compliance even in things religious; so force and violent prosecution in such cases have been always fruitless. For it is known how much they are disadvantaged as to success, in that the righteousness and equity of their pretended causes are always dubious to unconcerned persons, which makes them think that the true reason of them is other than what is pretended. When they see men whom they apprehend as innocent and guiltless as themselves, as to all the concernments of mankind in this world, pursued with penalties equal unto those that are notoriously criminal, they are greatly inclined unto commiseration towards them; especially if at the interposition of the name and worship of God in the cause, they judge for aught appears to them they fear God and endeavour to please him, at least as well as those by whom they are molested.

And when they farther understand, that those whom they see to suffer such things as they account grievous, and are really ruinous to them and their families, do it for their conscience' sake, it strongly induceth them to believe that it must needs be something good and honest that men choose

so to suffer for them, rather than to forego. For all suffering for religion, they know to be in the power and will of them that suffer, and not of those that inflict penalties upon them; for their religion is their choice, which they may part withal, if they esteem it not worth the hazard wherewith it is attended.

Thus the Roman historian tells us, in the first sufferings of the Christians at Rome. 'Quamquam adversus sontes, et novissima exempla meritos' (for so he thought) 'miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, sed in sævitiam aliquorum absumerentur.'

Nor is it a probable way of dealing with the consciences of men, especially of multitudes who are able to give mutual testimony and encouragement to one another. Yea, in such a state of things, dangers of times delight men, and they find a satisfaction, if not an honour, in their miseries, as having sufficient assurance that it is a glorious and blessed thing to suffer things hard and dreadful in the world, when they are conscious to themselves of no guilt or evil. And therefore, as severity hath hitherto got no ground on the minds of men in this matter, no more is it like to do for the future. And if it be proceeded in, it cannot be avoided but that it must be perpetuated from one generation to another, and a sad experiment be made, who will first be wearied, those that inflict penalties, or those that undergo them. And what in the mean time will become of that composure of the spirits of men, that mutual trust, confidence, and assurance, between all sorts of persons, which is the abiding foundation of public peace and prosperity?

Also, what advantages have been made by some neighbour nations, what at present they farther hope for, from that great anxiety which the minds of men are cast into, merely and solely on the account of what they feel or fear, from their dissent unto the public worship, which to themselves is utterly unavoidable, is known to all.

But we have done? and what are we that we should complain of any whom God is pleased to stir up and use for our exercise and trial? We desire in patience and silence to bear his indignation against whom we have sinned, and for what concerns those ways and truths of his, for whose profession we may yet suffer in this world, to approve our con-

sciences unto him, and to leave the event of all unto him, who will one day judge the world in righteousness. We know that we are poor sinful worms of the earth, in ourselves meet for nothing but to be trodden down under the foot of men; but his ways and the purity of his worship are dear unto him, which he will preserve and vindicate from all opposition. In the mean time, as it is our duty to live peaceably with all men in a conscientious subjection unto that authority which he hath set over us, we shall endeavour so to behave ourselves in the pursuit and observance of it, as that 'whereas we may be evil spoken of, as evil doers, men may be ashamed, beholding our good conversation in Christ, and give glory to God in the day of visitation.'

Whatever is ours, whatever is in our power, whatever God hath intrusted us with the disposal of, we willingly resign and give up to the will and commands of our superiors; but as to our minds and consciences in the things of his worship and service, he hath reserved the sovereignty of them unto himself; to him must we give an account of them at the great day; nor can we forego the care of preserving them entire for him, and loyal unto him, without a renunciation of all hopes of acceptance with him, and so render ourselves of all men the most miserable. May we be suffered herein to be faithful unto him, and the everlasting concernments of our own souls, we shall always labour to manifest, that there is no way or means of peace and reconciliation among those who, professing faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, yet differ in their apprehensions about sundry things some way or other belonging thereunto, that is appointed by him, and may expect a blessing from him, but we will readily embrace, and, according as we are called, improve to the utmost.

And if herein also our endeavours meet with nothing but contempt and reproach, yet none can hinder us but that we may pour out our souls unto God, for the accomplishment of his blessed and glorious promises concerning that truth, peace, and liberty, which he will give unto his church in his appointed time. For we know, 'That when he shall rise up to the prey, and devour the whole earth with the fire of his jealousy, he will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with

one consent, that the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, his glory shall be revealed, so that all flesh shall see it together, and then shall all his people receive from him one heart, and one way, that they may fear him for ever, for the good of them and their children after them, by virtue of the everlasting covenant.' And for our own parts, whatever our outward condition be, we know he will perfect that which concerns us, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands, 'because his mercy endureth for ever.'

A

WORD OF ADVICE

TO

THE CITIZENS OF LONDON.

A

WORD OF ADVICE

TO

THE CITIZENS OF LONDON.

I DO hope you are all sensible of those obligations that are on you, to seek the public good of the city, whereof you are members, in your several capacities; I am sure you ought so to be. For all laws, divine and human, all things that are praiseworthy among men, all your own circumstances in peace, safety, and profit, all your interest in reputation and posterity, with the oaths you have taken to the city, do require it of you. And you know, that this public good of the city, which you are so obliged to seek and promote, cannot consist in the end of any private, separate designs; but in what is comprehensive of the whole commonalty, in its order, state, and circumstances. A steady design and endeavour for the promotion hereof, in all that is virtuous and praiseworthy in you, as citizens; and for which some have been renowned in all ages. Where this is not, men's lusts and passions, and self-interest, will on all occasions be the rule of their actions. Neither hath the city, as such, any other animating principle of consistency or stability. Outward order and law without it are but a dead carcase; and the citizens a multitude living in one perpetual storm, which any external impression can easily drive into confusion. So far, therefore, as this design worketh effectually in you, regulating your endeavours and actions, you are good and useful citizens, and no farther. He who is so intent on his private occasions as to neglect the good of the public, is useless, a character of no reputation; and he who hath any design inconsistent with it, is treacherous.

And this is worth your consideration, that this city, whereof you are members, which now consists of you, hath

been for some ages past justly esteemed one of the most eminent and renowned cities in the world. For although other cities may be the seats of greater empires, and some may exceed it in number of inhabitants; yet take it in all its concerns, of religion, government, and usefulness in the world, by trade and otherwise, and it may he said, without immodesty, that the sun shines not on any that is to be preferred before it.

It is therefore unquestionable, that you can have no greater interest, no more useful wisdom, than in taking care, and using all diligence, that the decay or ruin of such a city be not under your hands, nor in your generation: that you leave not such a detested remembrance of yourselves unto future ages. To forfeit all the mercies that divine Providence hath bestowed on this city, to bury its glory and reputation by and under your miscarriages, would leave such a character of yourselves unto posterity, as I hope you will never deserve.

And you cannot but be stirred up unto your duty herein, by the consideration of the dealings of God with this city in late years, which have been great and marvellous. Never had any city on the earth in so short a time, so many divine warnings, so many calls from heaven, so many distresses, so many indications of God's displeasure, as in plague, fire, war, and the like, and yet continued in its station without a visible compliance with them. Nineveh repented upon one warning, and was not ruined. Jerusalem refused to do so, upon many, and perished for ever. Whatever disputes there may be about the causes of these things, not to take notice of them as indications of divine displeasure, is a branch of that atheism which will quickly turn instructive warnings into desolating judgments. The heathen dealt not so with their supposed deities on such occasions.

Besides, on the other hand, this city hath had no less eminent pledges of divine care and concernment in it. Without them, it had either lain in its ashes, or returned into them again mingled with blood, by the designings of evil men. And these, no less than the former, call for diligent attendance unto your duty, in the seeking the public good of the place, in a neglect whereof God himself will be eminently despised.

But yet after all these divine warnings and mercies, whatever other apprehensions any may have, under a pursuit of their own designs, the present state of your city, in the judgment of all unprejudiced persons, is deplorable, and in a tendency unto ruin. For it is filled with divisions, animosities, feuds, and distrusts, on various occasions, from one end of it unto the other. And whilst it is so, some persons are allowed and countenanced to increase and inflame them, by public weekly libels, full of scandalous, illegal, malicious defamations and provocations, against whole parties of men; a thing never heard of, at least never tolerated in any government, where the subjects of it are at peace, under the protection of the law. And though it may be that which pleaseth men light and vain, or malicious and revengeful, or such as hope for advantage by public confusion; yet is it marvellous that wise men should not observe, how disadvantageous it is unto the government itself. Where a city is thus divided in itself, we have infallible assurance that it cannot stand. Nor can this so do, for unless its divisions be healed, they will one way or other, at one time or another, prove its ruin. At present, it is only divine Providence immediately by itself, supplying the want of an animating union, that preserves it from dissolution.

At the same time, and by the same means, those public funds of money, which should give trust and trade their due circulation, are greatly failed among you. Such things indeed should not be mentioned unto the encouragement of our enemies, could they be concealed. But it is to no purpose to hide that which the sun shines on in the sight of all; nor to be silent in that which is the common talk of all that walk your streets. That renowned name of the chamber of London, the sacred repository and treasury of the fortunes and bread of widows and orphans, who are under the especial care of God, which the city therein have taken upon them to represent, is so shaken in its reputation as to render the thing itself useless. And it will be well, if that which in its righteous administration was the stability of the city, do not now, through the cries and tears of the oppressed (being of that sort of persons who have an especial interest in divine justice and compassion), contribute towards the shaking of its foundations. And it is somewhat

strange to me that men can sleep in peace, in the enjoyment of their private riches, whilst such a public trust is failing under their conduct.

The growth also of penury amongst many, with unparalleled failing of multitudes, whereof there are instances renewed almost every day, in coincidence with the divisions mentioned, hath almost put an end unto the small remainder of private trust, the only sovereign ligament of your being and constitution. For from hence many begin to think, that they have nothing safe but what is by them, or in their own immediate custody; and when they have so disposed of their substance, they quickly begin to fear, that it is most unsafe in that disposal. For when the minds of men are shaken from the true and real foundation of this trust and confidence, they know not where to fix again, until they are pursued by their own fears into farther disorders.

Whereas, therefore, cities stand not on the foundation of their walls, houses, and buildings; but on the solid, harmonious principles of the minds of the citizens, and unity in design for the promotion of its public good: where they are weakened, impaired, perplexed, and cast into such horrid confusions, as they must be by the ways and means mentioned, the least impression on them will rush them into destruction.

Whilst things are in this state and condition among you, it is sufficiently known, that the avowed, implacable enemies of your city, I mean the Papists, are intent on all advantages, improving them unto their own ends; their present design being so open and naked, as that it is the common discourse of all sorts of persons; yet is it such, as nothing but the prudence of the government and patience of the nation can frustrate and disappoint. And not to reflect with any severity on our own countrymen, who are of that religion, beyond what is openly manifest; you are much mistaken, if you know not, that your city is the principal object of the hatred, malice, revenge, and destructive designs of the ruling party of that religion or faction abroad, through the whole world. Unto their conduct of affairs you owe the flames of sixty-six. Nor will they rest, but in your utter ruin, or, which is worse, the establishment of their religion amongst you.

I heartily wish, that there might be one short answer returned unto this representation of things in your city; namely, that they are not so as they are represented; but that these things are only fears, or fictions to promote some sinister ends. I wish all that hath been spoken, might be so at once dissipated and blown away. But the truth is, it is the least part of the ingredients of that direful composition which threatens the ruin of the city, and but a little scruple of any of them that hath been mentioned, or can have any place in the designed brevity of this address. Yea, sundry things of the same nature with them, and some no less pernicious than the worst of them, are, for just reasons, and to avoid all offence, here utterly concealed. There is scarce a man that walks your streets, unless he reel with self-interest and prejudice, but can give you a more dreadful account of the present state of the city, than here is offered unto you.

This, therefore, being the state of things among you, it is but a reasonable inquiry, whether you judge not yourselves obliged in conscience, honour, and interest, to postpone all your private inclinations, animosities, designs, and desires, arising for the most part from things foreign to the city, unto the public good thereof, and the ways whereby it may be promoted; or, whether you had rather sacrifice the city unto utter ruin, than to forego those inclinations and aims, which are suggested unto you by the interest of others, no way belonging unto the peace thereof. And you may be prompted to make this inquiry of yourselves, because in the peace of the city you shall have peace, and not otherwise. There is no assurance unto any of an escape in public calamities. And those who have most, are most concerned in the preservation of order. It is a fatal mistake in men of high places, and plentiful enjoyments in the world, to suppose that all things must bow to their humour, that there is not more care and diligence, more of condescension, compliance, and self-denial required in them, for the composing of public differences, and the preservation of tranquillity, than is of others. Nothing but necessity can countenance wise men to venture much against nothing.

Give me leave, therefore, to offer two things unto you, the one in general, the other more particular, with respect

unto your present duty, and that in order unto the proposal of other things of the like kind, if this find acceptance.

And I am in the first place sure enough, that if we are Christians, if we are not ashamed of our religion, and the conduct thereof, if we believe either the promises or threatenings of God in his word, it is your present duty, and that which you must give an account of hereafter, to endeavour in your places and capacities the promotion of all those things wherewith God is well pleased, and whereon he hath used to turn away impendent, threatened, deserved judgments from cities and nations. What they are, your teachers can instruct you, and if they do not, it will be no excuse unto you in the neglect of them. If the city perish for want of reformation, or a compliance with divine warnings in turning unto God, the ruin of it in part will lie at your doors. And if such considerations are despised, as usually they are, as impertinent preachments, you will find ere long your condition remediless.

This is premised only in general, to prepare the way for an enumeration of the things that belong unto it, that may be offered hereafter. At present, I shall propose only one thing unto you in particular; and that is, whether the present prosecution of Protestant dissenters in the city, be not diametrically opposite unto that public good of it, in all its concerns, which you are obliged to promote? You will say, it may be, that this is not your work, but the work of the law. But I am sure such things are done in your streets every day, as no law mentioneth, or giveth countenance unto. Let the matter of fact be rightly stated, and it will appear, whether any of you have a blameable accession thereunto or no.

There is no complaint intended against the law about religion, which have the stamp of authority upon them. Yet is it no offence to say, that at present they are suited neither to the good of religion, nor of the city. For this is the condition of all penal laws, that they have their sole use from the circumstances which they do respect, and not from any thing in themselves. And as there may be mistakes in their first enacting, rendering them destructive unto the ends which they are designed to promote; so the alteration of circumstances may make their execution pernicious; as

I wish it be not in the present case, as wise men have judged it would be. However, the present proceedings against Protestant dissenters, under the pretence of law, are accompanied with so many unparalleled severities, as no good man, unbiassed by interests, can possibly give countenance unto. And hereof we may give some instances.

The prosecution and execution of the laws against dissenters, are not left unto the ordinary process of the administration of justice, as those against the Papists are, and all penal laws ought to be; but the vilest and most profligate villains, that the nation can afford, are entitled, encouraged, and employed for their own advantage, under the name of informers, to rule and control all civil officers, to force them to serve their known, base ends, in searching after, finding out, pursuing, and destroying of such as are supposed to be offenders against those laws. Although their persons are known to be profligate, and their ends to be only their own gain; yet no ordinary magistrate dares deny them his ready obedience and service, in the intimations of their pleasure, which makes many men of generous spirits weary of all public characters and employments. A way of procedure this is, which the greatest, and wisest pagan emperor, who ever suffered any persecution of the Christian religion, did forbid; and which hath ever been infamous in all nations, as that which tended unto the dishonour of the government, and the disturbance of public tranquillity, having had formerly a fatal catastrophe in this nation itself.

Besides, the present procedure in the execution of these laws is accompanied with clancular convictions, judgments, and determinations of penalties, with the infliction of them, for a first, second, third time, and so on, without any the least notice given of the first pretended offence, without summons, trial, or hearing of the parties concerned. Now whatever any may pretend, whose places may give countenance unto their judgments, this way of procedure in the execution of penal laws, is contrary unto the example given by God himself unto all mankind in such cases; contrary to the light of nature and all principles of equity; contrary to the usage of all civilized nations in all ages; contrary to

the true use and end of all penal laws, with the ordinary administration of justice in this kingdom. An invention it is to make justice abscond itself in corners, like robbers on the highway, to watch for the ruin and destruction of unwary men; than which nothing is more adverse unto its nature, use, and end. That pretence of justice in the execution of penal laws, whose first and principal end is not the warning of men to avoid the penalty enacted, is oppression, and nothing else. Not to reflect any thing therefore on the laws themselves, it is manifest that in this part of their present execution, there hath been high oppression, to which too many in the city have made an accession.

Again, the laws made against Papists, or that of the 23d of Eliz. is applied unto these Protestant dissenters. For that that law was made against popish recusants only is so notoriously evident, from the time wherein it was made, with all the circumstances of that season; the known interest, dangers, and counsels of the kingdom at that season; the reason of its making as expressed in the preamble; the full description in the law itself of the persons intended; the interpretation of it in practice for so long a time; the providing of another law many years after, with respect only unto such dissenters as were not Papists, from whose penalties the Papists were excepted, because of the provision made for their restraint and punishment; that it would be marvellous that any person of an ordinary understanding, from some general and ambiguous words in an occasional passage in it, should countenance the application of it unto Protestant dissenters, but that we know that the whole souls of some men are forced to bow and yield obedience unto prejudice and interest.

And the execution of these laws, as managed by the informers, hath been accompanied for the most part with so much rage and violence, profane swearing, and bloody menaces, as hath occasioned the terror and unspeakable damage of many, if not in the city itself, yet in its suburbs. Whether this be acceptable unto God, of good report, and praiseworthy among men, judge ye.

But that which exceeds all other exorbitancies in this

kind is, that whilst these dissenters are thus pursued, under the pretence of the execution of civil penal statutes, there is set on foot a course of excommunications, in order unto the deprivation of their liberties, and livelihoods, wherein a divine institution is so shamefully prostituted unto secular ends, as that it is highly scandalous unto the Christian religion.

And this is continued to be offered, notwithstanding the presentment of the late jury amongst you. They pretend their judgment to be, that the best way for the obtaining peace and quietness in the city, in its present circumstances, is the diligent severe execution of the penal statutes against dissenters. They might also have presented as their judgment, with an equal evidence of truth and prudence, that in time of public danger from fires, by reason of their unparalleled frequency, the best way for the quenching of them, is the diligent casting of fire balls into the houses that do remain. They might have given an equal credit to both by their authority, in the judgment of all men of any tolerable understanding.

And of the same sort, with the like mixture of good nature, is their officious inhumanity, in desiring the prosecution and ruin of all nonconforming ministers who live in or about London; though under great mistakes as to some of them, whom they thought meet to name in particular. There are penal laws which respect evils, that are so in their own nature, antecedently unto the constitution of the penalties contained in them. Such are murder, adultery, perjury, profane swearing, drunkenness, cheating, and the like. It is consistent with the Christian religion, and that common candour and ingenuity which is required among mankind, for every man in his station to press for the diligent execution of those laws. But there is another sort of them, which first constitute evils and then penalties. They make things to be faults, which otherwise on no account are so, and then punish them. Such is the law prohibiting nonconforming ministers to live in corporations; this is made a particular crime by that law, and is so no otherwise. Before the making of that law it was as lawful for them so to do, as for any of this jury; and it will be so again, when the voice of pub-

lic good for its legal suspension, or abrogation, shall be heard above the outcries of some sort of persons. And where public good is not the only rule and measure of the execution of such laws, they are all oppressive; nor are they otherwise interpreted in any righteous nation. For men voluntarily to press for the severe execution of such laws, argues a fierceness of disposition, which hath ever its stamp and character upon it; which the gentlemen of the jury, the next time they meet, may do well to inquire whose it is.

THE

STATE OF THE KINGDOM

WITH RESPECT TO

THE PRESENT BILL

AGAINST CONVENTICLES.

THE

STATE OF THE KINGDOM,

WITH RESPECT TO

THE PRESENT BILL AGAINST CONVENTICLES.

HE whole kingdom is at present in peace and quietness, all persons being under the highest satisfaction in his majesty's government, and absolutely acquiescing therein.

In this condition, all individual men are improving their industry, according to their best skill and opportunities, for their own private advantage and service of the public.

Such is the state of things in Europe at present and among ourselves, that the entire industry of all the inhabitants of this nation, with all possible encouragements given thereunto, is scarcely able to maintain themselves in their present respective conditions, and the whole in its due splendour, honour, and strength.

The bill against conventicles, if passed, will introduce a disturbance into this order of things in every county, every city, every borough and town corporate, and almost every village in the nation.

Those on whom this disturbance will fall are, for the most part, merchants, clothiers, operators in our own manufactures, and occupants of land, with the like furtherers and promoters of trade.

The end aimed at is their conformity, or their ruin. For the ministers being for the most part poor, and ruined already, the great penalty directed to be laid on them in the first place must immediately fall upon the people, those also that are able being liable to distress for the penalty of others that are poor, which, if executed, will be the certain ruin of many.

It is manifest that few will conform upon the severity, if

any at all; nor is it a suitable means for the conviction of any one man in the world.

The people therefore will, some of them, continue to meet, notwithstanding this act; and some of them at present, it may be, will forbear.

For those who will continue their meeting, as accounting themselves obliged in conscience so to do, they will immediately so dispose of their estates and concerns, that they shall be as much out of the reach of the penalties of the law, as can well and honestly be contrived; nor can any man blame them for so doing. And what an obstruction this will prove in the circulation of the trade of the nation, is easy to imagine.

Others, who will forbear going at present to meetings, yet will prepare themselves so to dispose of their estates and concerns, as that they and their families may not be ruined here by penalties, or that they may not subsist elsewhere.

In the mean time, all trust will fail between persons of mutual engagements. Those who are not obnoxious to the penalties of this act, will fear that others who are so will be ruined by it; and so take their concerns out of their hands: those who are so obnoxious will call in theirs out of the hands of others, lest they should be there liable to distress; and so all mutual trust in the nation will fail.

The minds of innumerable persons now at peace and rest, will be cast into fears, troubles, perplexities, and restless contrivances for their own safety, by hiding, flying, or the like ways of escape; and thereby an issue will be put to all their industry at present, not useless to the commonwealth.

The residue of the body of the people, not delighted with these severities, will stand and gaze, looking on with great discouragement as to their own endeavours, being many of them entangled with the concernments of those that suffer, and naturally disliking informers upon penal statutes, which sort of men they will not rejoice to see enriched with their peaceable neighbours' goods.

That under this great change in the minds and industry of so considerable a part of the nation, there will hardly, by the remaining discomposed party, be a revenue raised for the private occasions of the subjects, and a surplusage for

the necessity of the government, as things are stated at this day in the world, is evident to all impartial men.

There can be but two things pleaded to give countenance to this high severity, which will certainly be attended with all the consequences mentioned.

The first is, that an evil greater than all those enumerated, will be prevented by it: and of evils, the least is to be chosen.

The other, that a good, which shall outbalance all those evils, will be attained.

The evil to be prevented is sedition, commotions, and tumults, which the meetings now to be prohibited will occasion.

It is acknowledged, that there is more evil in these things than in all those before mentioned. But it is positively denied, that there is the least cause of suspicion of any such evils from the meetings now prohibited, at least as they may be stated under the inspection of the magistrate. For,

Experience of the resolved peaceableness under great opportunities to attempt disturbances during the plague, fire, and war, in those who thus meet, evidence the contrary against all exceptions.

Their declared principles are for all due subjection to his majesty; and they are ready to give that security of their adherence to their principles, which all other subjects do, and which mankind, in such cases, must be contented withal.

It is their interest to be peaceable and quiet, as enjoying, under his majesty's government, the best condition they are capable of in this world, whilst they have liberty for their consciences in the things of God.

They are particularly sensible of the obligation that is put upon them in their liberty, unto subjection and gratitude to his majesty beyond other subjects, which will oblige them to faithfulness and stability in their allegiance.

The fears therefore of the consequence of this evil is plainly pretended, without any ground of reason or cause of suspicion.

The good to be aimed at, which must outbalance all the evils mentioned before, is conformity.

There is already an agreement in doctrine, and the substantials of worship amongst most, and will be so, though a well regulated liberty shall be granted.

A uniformity in all rituals and ceremonies is so far from being a good, that should lie in the balance against all the evils which the pressing of it with the severity intended will certainly produce; as that, it may be, it will not compensate the trouble of any one quiet and peaceable subject in the kingdom.

It is justly feared, that the bill, as proposed, leaves neither the king himself, nor any of his subjects, that just right, liberty, and privilege, which are inseparably inherent in him and his crown, and which belong unto them by the fundamental laws of the land.

It is presumed, what has thus in general been offered, may appear more evident by the following particulars.

1. Such is the state of affairs abroad in the world, and among ourselves, that the encouragement of all sorts of persons unto honest industry in their respective capacities and employs, is absolutely necessary unto the supportment of the honour and government of the kingdom, and the comfortable subsistence of the subjects of it. Without this, in the securest peace, we shall speedily find one of the worst effects of war, in a distressing general poverty.

2. Unto the encouragement of such honest endeavours, mutual trust among all sorts of men, is necessary; which can never be attained nor preserved, but where all peaceable persons have the same protection and assurance of the law. Wherever this trust generally fails, it threatens the dissolution of any society of men.

3. All sorts of dissenters are disposed unto a complete acquiescency in the government, desiring no other encouragement unto their usefulness under it, but only that force be not offered unto their consciences in things appertaining unto the worship of God, which is the common right of nature and grace, as well as the present visible interest of the kingdom.

4. Unless these things, namely, industrious endeavours in the way of trade and usefulness, common mutual trust, with acquiescency in the government be countenanced and preserved, it is impossible that the welfare and prosperity of

the kingdom should be continued, as, by God's blessing upon them, they will be.

5. The present prosecution of them who dissent from the church of England, tends directly unto the subversion of all these things, and hath in a great measure already effected it; nor doth it promote the interest of religion, or conformity unto the church itself. For,

(1.) By the execution of the act against seditious conventicles (whereof in the true sense and construction of the law, not one of those of the dissenters are) many have their goods taken away, multitudes are forced to remove their habitations and to give over their useful callings, to the great obstruction and ruin of common industry in many places.

(2.) By the writs and processes on the statutes for not coming to church (not intended, as is humbly conceived, against Protestants), whereby a devastation is designed of the estates of many peaceable and loyal persons, at the wills of many needy prosecutors and informers, all mutual trust is shaken and impaired. For amongst multitudes of industrious subjects, none know how soon themselves, or those in whom they are concerned, may fall under the ruining execution of those statutes, they being a very great number who are already sued and molested thereby. And some in demanding their just debts have been threatened by their debtors with a prosecution on those statutes, and so forced to desist the recovery of their debts, to avoid greater inconveniency than the loss of them.

(3.) By the act for banishing ministers five miles from corporations (humbly conceived contrary to the birthright privilege of every Englishman unconvicted of any crime) many are driven from their habitations, many imprisoned, to the ruin of themselves and their families, and the great dissatisfaction of all uninterested persons.

(4.) Whereas sundry justices of the peace, men of known integrity, and of especial interest in the places of their residence, are threatened and sued for not complying with the unseasonable desires of every informer, whereby they are discouraged in the discharge of their duty, and weary of their office; it is a matter of great dissatisfaction unto all sober men. For the persons so molested, are known to de-

sign nothing but the prosperity and welfare of the place wherein they live and act in their office.

(5.) Most of those who act visibly in these prosecutions are persons of ill fame and reputation, desperate in their outward fortunes, and profligate in their conversations, whose agency is a scandal unto them by whom they are employed. And both these things last mentioned evidently tend to the dissatisfaction and disturbance of the minds of sober and honest men. For as by this procedure the industry of multitudes is defeated, and mutual trust impaired among all sorts of men; so are the minds of many diverted from a just acquiescency in the government, to hearken after changes and alterations, and made obnoxious unto ill impressions.

(6.) Neither is religion in general promoted by these proceedings, as is manifest in the event; nor can it so be. For as they are contrary to the prime dictates of the Christian religion (as is humbly conceived) so many immoralities are occasioned by them. To omit other instances, the vilest persons being encouraged in the cases mentioned to swear for their own advantage, there have been in a short time more public perjuries before magistrates, than can be proved or suspected to have been in some ages before.

(7.) Nor is conformity, the end pretended to be aimed at, at all advanced by them; as is sufficiently manifest in universal experience. And whereas the only way to promote either religion, or conformity, is by the laborious preaching and exemplary, humble conversation of the clergy, if any should not like this way, but betake themselves to force alone, they would have no reason to expect success.

6. Whereas, therefore, his majesty hath long since declared his royal sense of these things; and both houses of Parliament have intimated their desire and intention to give some ease and relief unto the consciences of sober and peaceable dissenters; and many wise and judicious magistrates have openly declined, what lieth in them, all engagement in these prosecutions; so that the visible prosecutors are generally persons of ill fame and reputation, seeking to repair the ruins of their idleness and licentiousness by the spoils of the honest labours of other men, while the generality of sober and industrious people in the nation, who

understand how much they are concerned in the peaceable endeavours of others, dislike these proceedings. To prevent an offence by petitioning, it is humbly offered unto the parliament, to free the minds of so great numbers of peaceable subjects as are concerned in these things, from fears and disquietments, and the estates of many from ruin, to encourage industry, mutual trust, and universal acquiescency in the government, to vindicate the honour of the Protestant religion, and prepare the way for a future coalescency in God's good time, through love and condescension, by the removal of these occasions of animosities, distrusts, and provocations, that they would by order suspend the farther prosecution of the penal laws against dissenters in religion, until upon mature consideration they shall have settled things in a better way, unto the glory of God, the honour of his majesty, the security of the Protestant religion, and prosperity of the kingdom; which are all earnestly prayed for, by those concerned in this address.

AN

ACCOUNT

OF

THE GROUNDS AND REASONS

ON WHICH

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

DESIRE THEIR LIBERTY.

THE

GROUNDS AND REASONS

ON WHICH

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

DESIRE THEIR LIBERTY.

Although it be sufficiently known, both at home and abroad, among all the reformed churches, what religion we profess, by the confession of our faith, long since made and published in our own and sundry other languages, yet on this occasion of our desire of deliverance from all penal laws in matters of religion, we esteem ourselves obliged to declare, and do declare,

1. That we are Protestants, firmly adhering unto the doctrine of the Protestant religion, as declared and established by law in the nine and thirty Articles, excepting only such of them as concern rites and ceremonies, &c. and as it is explained in the publicly authorized writings of the most learned divines of this nation, in the reigns of queen Elizabeth and king James.

2. That we are ready to make the renunciation of popish principles established by law; and not only so, but, as God shall assist us, to give our testimony with our lives in opposition unto popery, and in the defence of the Protestant religion against it, with all other good Protestant subjects of the kingdom, when we shall be called thereunto.

3. Unto this resolution of a steadfast adherence unto the Protestant religion, in opposition unto popery, we have many peculiar engagements. For,

(1.) Our principles concerning church-order, rule, and worship, wherein we differ from the church of England, are not capable of a compliance with, or reconciliation unto, those of the papacy; but are contradictory unto them, and

utterly inconsistent with them. Where there is an agreement in general principles, and men differ only in their application unto some particulars, those differences are capable of a reconciliation; but where the principles themselves are directly contradictory, as it is between us and the Papists in this matter, they are capable of no reconciliation.

(2.) We have no interest that may be practised on by the arts or insinuations of the Papists, for we are neither capable of any advantages by ecclesiastical domination, power, promotions, with dignities and revenues belonging thereunto, which are the principle allurements of the papacy; nor are engaged in any such combination, political or ecclesiastical, as that the contrivance of a few should draw on the compliance of the whole party. These things being utterly contrary unto, and inconsistent with, our principles, the Papists have no way of attempting us, but by mere force and violence.

(3.) Our fixed judgment being the same with that of all the first reformers, namely, that in the idolatrous apostacy of the papal church, with bloody persecutions, the antichristian state foretold in the Scripture doth consist, we are for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them, or reconciliation unto them.

(4.) Whereas our principles concerning church-order, rule, and worship, are directly suited unto the dissolution and ruin of the papal church-state (whence the Papists take their warrants for all the evil contrivances which some of them are guilty of in this kingdom), and will, so far as they are taken out of the Scripture, at length effect it; we can have no other expectation from the prevalency of their interest in this nation, but utter extirpation and destruction. We are therefore fully satisfied, that our interest and duty in self-preservation consists in a firm adherence unto the Protestant religion as established in this nation, and the defence thereof, against all the attempts of the papacy.

4. We own and acknowledge the power of the king, or supreme magistrate in this nation, as it is declared in the thirty-seventh Article of religion, and are ready to defend and assist in the administration of the government in all causes, according unto the law of the land, with all other good Protestant subjects of the kingdom.

We do therefore humbly desire,

First, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties, civil or ecclesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the church of England, as at present established in the rule of it; and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our own assemblies; upon our renunciation of popery, by law prescribed, and the subscription of our ministers, or public teachers, unto the Articles of religion, as before expressed.

Secondly, That as unto oaths, offices, and payment of duties, none whereof we do refuse, that we may be left unto the same laws and rules with all other Protestant subjects, that there may be the least difference remaining between us and them, and the greatest evidence of our being united in the defence of the Protestant religion, and interest of the nation.

THE CASE

OF

PRESENT DISTRESSES

ON

NONCONFORMISTS

EXAMINED.

THE

PRESENT DISTRESSES

ON

NONCONFORMISTS

EXAMINED.

In the execution of an act entitled, 'An act against seditious Conventicles' (whereof large experience hath manifested that no dissenters are guilty), this practice hath been of late taken up, that upon the oath of some informers, convictions are clancularly made, and executions granted on the goods of those informed against, a first, second, third time, and without notice, warning, or summons, or any intimation of procedure against them, or allowance for them to make their own defence.

This practice is as contrary to the original pattern of all government, as unto the execution of law in criminal cases. When Adam sinned by the transgression of a penal law, God was the only governor of the world, and there was a temporal penalty annexed unto that transgression. But yet to manifest that personal conviction was to be the natural right of every transgressor, before the execution of punishment, he himself the only judge, though absolutely omniscient, deals with Adam personally, as to the matter of fact: 'Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?' and gave him the liberty of his own defence, as that which was his right, before he denounced any sentence against him. He is still the supreme governor of the world; and let magistrates take heed how they despise that precedent and pattern of the administration of justice in criminal causes, which he hath given and prescribed unto all mankind.

2. It is contrary to the light of nature, and that in such a principle as hath a great influence into the constitution and preservation of government in the world; and that is, that every man is obliged unto, and is to be allowed the unblamable defence of himself and his own innocency, against evil and hurt from others. This the law of God and nature require of every man, and the whole figure of human justice doth allow. And that he may do this without force or violence, the injury of others, or disturbance of natural order, is one of the principal benefits of government in the world, and one chief end of its institution. If this be taken away, the law of nature is violated, the chief end of government is destroyed, and all things are reduced to force and confusion. This men are deprived of in this practice, namely, of lawful self-defence before conviction, and the execution of penalties. And it is to no purpose to pretend, that this is a matter of small moment; so that although there should be a deviation in it from the common rule, yet the law of nature in general may be kept inviolable: for that law being the animating soul of all human government, as the whole in the whole; and the whole in every part, if it be wittingly contravened in any instance, it tends to the dissolution of the whole; and where any such thing is admitted, it will sully the beauty, and weaken the rightful power, of any government.

3. It hath been always rejected in all nations, even among the heathen, who have exercised government according unto the rules of reason and equity. So the laws and usage of the Romans is declared by Festus, Acts xxv. 'It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.' It is not of any weight to object, that this was in the case of death; for the reason of the law is universal, namely, that every one who is charged of a crime, in order unto punishment, should have liberty to answer for himself. And it was observed by them in all criminal causes whatever. No instance can be given of their varying in this process, but it is noted as an oppression: and the same practice is secured by the laws and usages of all civilized nations. For,

4. This procedure of allowing men charged with any crime, real or pretended, liberty to answer for themselves before judgment and execution, is so manifestly grounded on natural equity, so inseparable from the common presumptions of right and wrong amongst mankind, as that it could never be wrested from them on any pretence whatsoever. It is a contradiction unto common sense in morality and polity, for a man to be convicted of a crime exposing him to penalty, and not be allowed to make his own defence before such conviction: yea, let men call such a sentence and its execution by what name they please, there is no conviction in the case; and it is ridiculous to call it so, where a man is not allowed to defend himself, or plead his own innocence, if he be ready so to do. The common saying of 'Qui statuit aliquid, parte inaudita altera, æquum licet statuerit, haud æquus fuit,' is no less owned as unto its natural equity than that other, 'Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri non feceris;' and both of them condemn this practice in the consciences of all men, not blinded by prejudice or interest.

5. The general ends of penal laws, which alone make them warrantable in government, are inconsistent with such clancular convictions as are in this case pretended. Their first intention is authority to inquire into offences, whether they are real or no, for the preservation of public good and peace. And if it be found that the complaints concerning them are causeless, the second intention, which respects punishment, is superseded; as God declared in the case of Sodom, unto the inhabitants whereof, after inquiry, he granted a personal conviction by the angel he sent among them, unto whom they openly declared their own guilt. To omit the first intention of the law, and to go, 'per saltum,' unto the latter, is to make that which was designed for the good of all men, to be unto the danger of all, and ruin of many. For,

6. The practice designed takes away all security of the goods and estates from many peaceable subjects, even of all unto whom the case extends; for every evil man is enabled hereby, for his own profit and advantage, to take the goods of other men into his own possession, the owner knowing nothing of the cause of it, which possession shall be avowed

legal. Now this is utterly contrary unto all good government, and the principal end of the law, which is to secure unto every man the possession of his own goods, until he be legally convicted (on the best defence he can make for himself) that they ought by law to be taken from him. But in this case the legal right of one man unto his goods is transferred unto another, and that other enabled by force to take possession of them, before the true owner is once asked why it should not be so. The pretence of allowing him a liberty in some cases to make use of an appeal, and to sue for his own goods, when they are in the supposed legal possession of another, and he disenabled for such a suit by the loss of them, as many have been, is no help in this case, nor gives the least colour of justice to this procedure.

7. To interpret the words in the act to give countenance unto this way of procedure, is contrary to the known rules of interpreting laws of this nature. And these are,

(1.) That they are not to be made snares to catch and harm men, without just cause, and a necessity thereon for public good. To make such engines of them, is to divest them of all authority, nor can that reverence that is due unto government be preserved, unless it be manifest, that not only the laws but also the administration of them are for public good; so as that they are not capable, in their genuine sense, to be made snares for the hurt of men, in denying them their own just defence. Nor can there be a more dangerous inroad made on the security of the subjects, as to their property and liberty, in and by the administration of the law, than a wresting of it in any one instance unto the hurt or wrong of any. And we do know what consequence the interpretation and undue application of penal statutes, with the wresting them unto unwarrantable severities, have had here in England.

(2.) It is a rule of the same importance, that in dubious cases such laws are to be interpreted according to the custom and usage of proceedings in other laws of a like nature, and not be construed unto the interest of severity, especially where it is unto the gain and profit of other men: and what is the method of conviction in all other laws, towards persons who do not decline a trial, is known.

8. But besides all that hath been spoken, as unto the

reason of things in general, this practice is directly contrary to, and inconsistent with, the plain sense and intention of the law itself, whereof execution is pretended; for there is a gradation in the penalty annexed unto a continuance in the offence. The first conviction is for twenty pounds, the second for forty. And this will admit of no pretence, but that the person offending must know of the first conviction, that it may be a warning to him to avoid the additional penalty, which is for continuance in the same supposed offence after the first admonition. But in the present practice no such thing is allowed, but convictions are made for the first, second, and third offence, without any trial of what effect the first would be, which is contrary to the sense of the law, and an open wresting of it unto the ruin of men. And,

9. Lastly, these convictions are made on the oaths of the informers, who at present are a sort of men so destitute of all reputation, on the account of their indigency contracted by their profligate conversation, as that men of the like qualifications are prohibited by many laws from bearing testimony in any case, though in all other things the process be legal, open, and plain. To admit such persons to give oaths in private, without calling or summoning them to answer, who are charged by them, and thereon to put them into an actual possession of their goods unto their own use and advantage, is a practice which England hath had as yet no precedent for, nor found an especial name whereby to call it. Hereon perjuries have been multiplied among this sort of persons (whereof sundry of them have been legally convicted) to the dishonour of God, and great increase of the sin of the land. And whatever becomes of nonconformists, if the same kind of procedure should be applied unto other cases, (and why may it not be so, if in this instance the bounds of the law of nature and the usages of mankind should be broken down?) others would find themselves aggrieved as well as they.

These things are humbly submitted unto the consideration of the judges, justices, and juries, even all that are concerned in the administration or execution of the law.

A

LETTER

CONCERNING

MATTER OF THE PRESENT

EXCOMMUNICATIONS.

A LETTER,

&c.

Sir,

You judge aright, that at my last being in London, I did consider the unusual hurry of excommunications against those called dissenters; and because of the novelty of the proceedings therein, I did moreover endeavour my own satisfaction, as unto the design, causes, and ends of them; and I find it a thing easily attainable, without difficulty, or curiosity of inquiry. For whereas there is no covering of religion, nor any thing appertaining thereunto, save only a name or title cast upon them, they openly discover themselves of what sort they are, and what they belong unto; and among many other indecencies wherewith they are accompanied, one seemed to me to be very notable, and this is, the collection of whole droves together by summons and citations; then dealing with them in such a clamorous manner, as makes a representation of a public market or fair for chaffering about souls. But that, I found, which did principally affect the minds of men, was the event which these proceedings do tend unto and will produce; and they generally concluded, that they would be highly prejudicial, if not ruinous, unto all trust and trade, among the peaceable subjects of the kingdom; for they said, that if the commissaries would do as in the old Roman proscriptions in the time of Sylla, and of the triumvirate afterward, and set up the names of all that were to be proceeded against in public tables, to be exposed to the view of all, those concerned might shift for themselves as well as they could, and the residue of mankind might be at liberty to follow their own occasions; but whilst they retain an unreasonable reserve in their own breasts, as unto persons to be ruined by them, so as that they know not whose names, their own or of those with whom they are concerned, they shall see the next day affixed on the church doors, in order unto excommunication, it deprives them of all repose in the law of the land or public

justice, and breaks all their measures about the disposal of their affairs. How far this is already come to pass, you, that are in the place, know better than I; but sure I am, that the very rumour of it gives a general discomposure unto the minds of men.

Hearing no other discourse of these things, I was somewhat surprised with your letter, wherein you required my thoughts, what influence these excommunications may have on the consciences of them who are so excommunicated; for I did not think there would have any question been made about it: but since you are pleased to make the inquiry, I shall, for the satisfaction of my respects unto you (though as unto any other end I judge it needless), give you a brief account of my judgment concerning these proceedings, which is the same, for the substance of it, with that of all sober persons with whom I ever conversed.

Excommunication is the name of a divine institution of Christ, wherein, and in whose due and just administration, the consciences of Christians are, or ought to be, highly concerned; and this, as for other causes, so principally because it is the only sure representation of the future judgment of Christ himself, he did appoint it for this end, that so it might be. Providential dispensations are various, and no certain judgment can be made on them, as unto the final and eternal determination of things and causes; 'No man knoweth love or hatred by the things' of that nature 'that are before him;' but this is ordained by the law of Christ to be a just representation of his future judgment, with a recognition of the cause which he will proceed upon. Therefore it is divinely instructive, in what he himself will do in the great day; it is 'futuri judicii præ judicium:' but he will scarcely be thought well advised, who shall send men to Doctors' Commons to learn the way and manner of Christ's judgment of his church, with the causes which he will proceed upon. He giveth himself another account of it, Matt. xxv. 32. unto the end of the chapter; of what he there declares, there is neither name nor thing found among men of these practices, which we treat about. The mentioning of them would be looked on as a sedition against their authority, or else make them ashamed as a thief when he is found; but for any sort of person to undertake the administration

and execution of the sentence of excommunication against others, not making it their design to represent the judgment of Christ towards impenitent sinners, is to bid defiance to him and his gospel. Wherefore no person whatever, wise or unwise, good or bad, can be concerned in the excommunication in conscience, or on a religious account; I speak not only of them who are forced to suffer by them, but of them also by whom they are administered and denounced. For it is impossible that men should be so far forsaken of all understanding, as to imagine that the proceedings therein do belong unto the gospel, or Christian religion, any otherwise but as a debasement and corruption of it; neither is any man ever the less of the communion of the church of England, by these excommunications, though he may by force be debarred from some advantages that belong thereunto. Neither is the communion of any church to be valued, from which a man may be really and effectually expelled by such means; for this excommunication is not only null as to the efficacy of its sentence, on the account of its maladministration; but it is not in any sense that which it is called, and which it pretends to be. Idols are called gods, but we know they are nothing in the world; so is this proceeding called excommunication, but is no such thing at all. If a man should paint a rat or an hedge-hog, and write over it that it is a lion, no man would believe it so to be, because of its magnificent title. All that it can pretend unto is a political engine, used to apply the displeasure of some, upon an accidental advantage, unto them whose ruin they design; and therein a satisfaction unto revenge, for discountenancing their supposed interest. That there is any acting in it of the authority of Christ, any representation of his love, care, and tenderness towards his church, any thing that is instructive in his mind or will, any 'præludium' of the future judgment, no man I suppose does pretend, nor I am sure can do so, without reflecting the highest dishonour imaginable on Christ himself, and the gospel.

To make these things yet more evident, and to shew how remote the present excommunications are from all possibility of affecting the consciences of any, I shall briefly pass through the consideration of those things which principally belong unto them, and whereunto all their efficacy is re-

solved; and that which first offereth itself is, the persons by whom they are administered. The truth is, there is such a variety of scenes in this tragedy, and such different actors in it, from apparitor, with whom it begins, unto the jailor with whom it ends, that it seems not easy whom to ascribe the animating power and authority that is in it unto; but yet on a little consideration the matter is plain enough. The ministers of the parishes wherein the excommunicated persons are supposed to dwell, by whom the sentence of excommunication is rehearsed out of a paper from the court, have no concernment herein; for they know nothing of the causes or reasons of it, nor of the process therein, nor do pretend unto any right for the cognizance of them; nor do for the most part know the persons at all, on whose qualifications alone the validity or invalidity of the sentence doth depend; nor can give an account to God or man of what is done, as to right and equity; and therefore I no way doubt, but that those who are learned and pious among them, do hardly bear the yoke of being made such properties in those acts and duties, which appertain unto their ministerial function: but it is known who they are who begin the work, and carry on the process of it until its final execution; and I shall say no more concerning them, but this alone, that how meet soever they may be for the transaction of civil affairs, or for the skilful managing of that work herein, which they suppose committed unto them; yet as unto any thing wherein conscience may be affected with the authority of Jesus Christ, they can be of no consideration in it. If any man can but pretend to believe that our Lord Jesus, by an act, grant, law, or institution of his, by any signification of his mind or will, hath committed or doth commit, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of binding and loosing, of expelling out of, and admitting into, his church, unto these or such persons, he hath assuredly confidence enough to pretend unto a persuasion of whatever he pleases. They do not believe it themselves, nor among themselves pretend unto any such thing, but only a power to execute their own laws or canons. They do not judge that any personal, moral, or spiritual qualifications are required unto ecclesiastical administrations; which yet to deny, is to undermine all religion, without which they may be fit for all church duties,

who are no better than that archdeacon of Oxford, who being charged with immoralities in his conversation, justified himself by the soundness of his faith, affirming that he believed three Gods in one Person, and besides, he believed all that God himself did believe. Let a man out of interest, or fear, or ignorant superstition, strive never so much to affect his conscience with the excommunications of such men, he will never be able to effect it.

But be the personal qualifications of those intended what they please, the question is, how they came by that power and authority herein, which they pretend unto? They are chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, officials, with their court attendants, of whom we speak. I confess these horrid names, with the reports concerning them, and their power, are enough to terrify poor harmless men, and make them fear some evil from them. But excommunication is that which no man knows on what grounds to fear, from these names, titles, and offices: for that is the name of a divine ordinance instituted by Christ in the gospel, to be administered according to the rule and law thereof; but these names, and those unto whom they do belong, are utterly foreign unto the Scriptures, and, as unto the work, to the practice of the church for a thousand years; what therefore is done by them of this kind, must of necessity be utterly null, seeing that, as such, they have no place in the church themselves by the authority of Christ. But however it be undeniably evident, that they have no relation unto the Scripture, nor can have any authority from Christ, by virtue of any law or institution of his, nor countenance given unto them by any practice of the primitive church; yet what they do in this kind, being pretended acts of power and authority, an authority for them must be pleaded by them. But then it may be justly demanded of them, what it is; of what nature and kind? how it is communicated unto them, or derived by them from others? This is that which those who are excommunicated by them are principally concerned to inquire into, and which themselves in the first place are obliged to declare and evince. Unless men are satisfied in conscience, that those who act against them have just authority so to do, or in what they do, it is utterly impossible they should be concerned in conscience in what is done against them, or

be any ways obliged thereby. Here therefore they abide until they are satisfied in this just and necessary demand.

But here all things are in confusion; they can declare neither what authority is required unto what they do, nor how they come to possess that which they pretend unto. If it be from Christ, how comes it to operate on the outward concerns of men, their liberties and estates? If it be merely of man, whence do they give the name and pretence of a divine ordinance unto what they do? If any should follow the clue in this labyrinth, it is to be feared that it would lead them into the abyss of papal omnipotency.

As they exercise this power in courts of external jurisdiction and forms of law, they will not deny, I suppose, but that it is from the king: but why do they not then act that power in the king's name? for what is not done by his name, is not done by his authority. Ministers do not preach nor administer sacraments in the name of the king, for they do it not by his authority, or by virtue of authority derived from him; nor do parents govern their children or families in his name, but their own; because authority for it is their own, by the law of God and nature: but that exercise of power which externally affects the civil rights and liberties of men, must be in the king's name, or the foundations of the government of the nation are shaken. But I make it not my concernment what name or style they use in their courts. Let it be granted, for their own security, that they have all their power and authority from the king, it must be therewithal granted of what nature it is, namely, civil, and not spiritual: but why then doth what they do not go under the name of a civil order, constitution, or penalty, but of an ordinance or institution of Jesus Christ? Are not these things in their own nature everlastingly distinct? and is not conscience hereby fully absolved from any respect unto it, as such an ordinance, which in this supposition it neither is, nor can be? It is easily discernable, how these things tend unto the utter confusion of all things in religion.

If it be said that the power of it, as it is excommunication, is originally seated in the prelates, by virtue of their office, and is communicated unto these sort of persons by commission, delegation, or deputation, under their seals, it will yield no relief; for this fiction of the delegation of office

power, or the power of office, unto any, without giving them the office itself whereunto that power belongs, is gross and intolerable. Let it be tried, whether the bishops can delegate the power of ministerial preaching the word, and administration of the sacraments, unto any persons, without giving them the office of the ministry. If excommunication be an act of office power, authority to administer it cannot be delegated unto any without the office itself whereunto it doth belong; for these things are inseparable. I certainly believe it is the duty and concernment of some men to state proceedings of this nature on better foundations, that the exercise of such solemn duties of Christian religion be not exposed to utter contempt, nor men led, by a discovery of false pretences of divine institutions, to despise the things themselves that are so abused.

It were easy, from many other considerations, to demonstrate the nullity of these men's pretended authority, with respect unto excommunication, as it is an ordinance of the gospel, in which respect alone the consciences of men are concerned; and as unto their power over the civil rights and interests of men, those troubled by them must shift as well as they can.

But yet further, the manner of the administration of the present excommunications doth evidence their invalidity and nullity. That which they pretend unto, as hath been said, is a divine ordinance, an institution of Jesus Christ; and this declares in general how it ought to be administered by them who have authority for it, and are called thereunto. For it hence followeth, that it ought to be accompanied with an humble reverence of him and his authority, diligent attendance unto his law and the rule of his word in all things, with solemn, reiterated invocation of his holy name, for his presence, guidance, and assistance: where these things are neglected in the administration of any divine ordinances, it is nothing but the taking the name of God in vain, and the profanation of his worship. It may be some will despise these considerations; I cannot help it, they do it at their utmost peril: it is conscience alone which I respect in this discourse; they who have any such thing, will think these things reasonable.

Again, the especial nature of this institution doth require

an especial frame of mind in its administration; for it is the cutting off of a member of the same body with them, which cannot be without sense and sorrow. To cut off any from a church, who was never a member of it by his own consent, nor doth judge himself so to be, is ridiculous; hence St. Paul calls the execution of this censure, 'bewailing,' 2 Cor. xii. 21. denominating the whole action from the frame of mind wherewith it ought to be performed; and he that shall dare to decree or denounce this sentence, without sorrow and compassion for the sin, and on the person of him that is excommunicated, plays a game with things sacred for his advantage, and shall answer for his presumption.

Besides, as was before observed, it is an instituted representation of the Lord Christ, and his judgment in and of the church at the last day. If the consideration hereof be once out of the minds of them by whom it is administered, they must unavoidably err in all that they do; much more if it be never once in them; but this they ought to take on their souls and consciences, that what they do, Christ himself, if present, would do, and will do the same at the last day; for so he will deal with all impenitent sinners, he will denounce them accursed, and deliver them to Satan. There is undoubtedly required from hence a reverential care and circumspection in all that is done here: to make a false representation of Christ in these things, that is, his wisdom, authority, holiness, love, and care towards the church, is the worst and most deformed image that can be set up. What higher indignity can be offered to his gracious holiness, than to act and represent him as furious, proud, passionate, unmerciful, and delighting in the ruin of those that openly profess faith in him, and love unto him? God forbid that we should think that he hath any concern in such ways and proceedings.

Whereas also the next end of this censure is not destruction, but edification, or the repentance and recovery of lapsed sinners, it ought to be accompanied with continual fervent prayers for this end. This the nature of the thing itself requireth, this the Scripture directs unto, and such was the practice of the primitive church.

If we are Christians, we are concerned in these things as much as we are in the glory of Christ and the salvation of

our own souls. If we only make a pretence of religious duties, if we only erect an image of them for our own advantage, we may despise them, but at our peril. How well these things are observed in the present excommunications, is notorious. Once to mention them, is to deserve a second thunderbolt. An account of them, as to matter of fact, will be shortly given; at present I shall only say, that there is not any transaction of affairs in any kind amongst men civilized, wherein there is a greater appearance and evidence of turbulent passions, acting themselves in all manner of irregularities, more profaneness of expression, more insolent insultations, more brawling, litigious proceedings, more open mixtures of money demanded in pretended administrations of right and equity, than there are in the public proceedings about them. Shall any Christian suppose that the Holy Spirit of God, on whom alone depends the efficacy of all divine ordinances unto their proper end, will immix his holy operations in or with this furious exertion of the lusts of men? If this be looked on as the complement of Christian discipline, or the last and utmost actings of this authority of Christ towards men in this world, it must needs be a temptation unto men of atheistical inclinations: certainly greater scandal cannot be given; and it is the interest of some, at least for the preservation of a veneration to their office, to dispose of proceedings in this case in such a way and manner, as may administer occasion of consideration unto them concerned, and not be carried on, as at present, with laughter, indignation, and confusion; and if dissenters are to be destroyed, it is desired, that the work were left unto the penal statutes, which as now prosecuted and interpreted, are sufficient for it; rather than that the name of religion and a divine ordinance should merely for that end be exposed to contempt.

The last thing that I shall trouble you with at present is, the consideration of the persons against whom the present excommunications are blustered, with the pretended causes of them. These are they whom they call dissenters, concerning whom we may inquire what they are, and the cause of this pretended ecclesiastical severity towards them. And as unto the first part of the inquiry, they are such as believe and make open profession of all the articles of the Christian

faith; they do so, as they are declared in the Scripture; nor is the contrary charged on them. There is nothing determined by the ancient councils to belong unto Christian faith, which they disbelieve; nor do they own any doctrine condemned by them. They profess an equal interest of consent in the harmony of Protestant confessions, with any other Protestants whatever. They own the doctrine of the church of England as established by law, in nothing receding from it; nor have they any novel or uncatholic opinion of their own.

It is therefore utterly impossible to separate them from the communion of the catholic church in faith, or to cast them from that rock whereon they are built thereby. They do also attend unto divine worship in their own assemblies; and herein they do practise all that is agreed on by all Christians in the world, and nothing else; for they do not only make the Scripture the sole rule of their worship, so as to omit nothing prescribed therein to that purpose, nor to observe any thing prohibited thereby; but their worship is the very same with that of the catholic church in all ages; nothing do they omit that was ever used by it, nothing do they observe that was ever condemned by it; and this must be the principle and measure of catholic union in worship, if ever there be any such thing in the earth; to expect it in any other observances, is vain and foolish. Offering prayers and praises to God in the name of Jesus Christ, reading the holy Scripture, and expounding of it, singing of psalms to God, preaching of the word, with the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, in a religious observation of the Lord's day, unto these ends; all according as God doth enable them by his Spirit, is the sum and substance of the worship of the catholic church, wherein all Christians are agreed. These things the Scripture doth prescribe, and these things the church in all ages hath observed. All differences about this worship, which have filled the world with inhuman contentions, arose from men's arbitrary addition of forms, rites, modes, ceremonies, languages, cringings, adorations, which they would have observed in it, whereof the Scripture is silent, and primitive antiquity utterly ignorant. And it may be it will be one day understood, that the due observance of this catholic

worship, according as God enableth any thereunto, leaving others at liberty to use such helps unto their devotion as they shall think meet, is the only communion of worship in the church which the Scripture requires, or which is possible to be attained. About the imposition of other things, there ever were, since they were, and ever will be, endless contentions. Wherefore these dissenters practising nothing in the worship of God but what is approved by all Christians, particularly by the church of England, omitting nothing that either the Scripture or catholic tradition directs unto, they are, notwithstanding this pretended excommunication, secure of communion with the catholic church in evangelical worship.

Moreover, they plead that their conversation is unblamable; that they are peaceable in the civil government, and useful among their neighbours; if they do evil in these things, let them that prosecute them bear witness of the evil; but if they do well, why are they smitten? If they can be charged with any immoralities, with any disobedience unto the rule and precept of the gospel; those by whom they are thus prosecuted are highly concerned, if not in conscience, yet in honour and interest, to manage the charge against them, that some countenance may be given unto their proceedings. For 'the law is not made,' as penal, 'for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobedient; for the ungodly, and for sinners; for unholy, and profane;' and if it be otherwise with the laws about these excommunications, they neither belong to, nor are derived from, the law of God.

There are indeed great clamours against them, that they are schismatics, and separatists, and things of the like nature; that is, that they are dissenters: but in this case, the whole force of any inference from hence is built on this supposition, That it is the will of Christ, that those who profess faith in him, and obedience unto him unblamably, should be excluded from an interest in and participation of these ordinances of divine worship which are of his own institution, who will not comply with and observe such rights and practices in that worship as are not so, but confessedly of human invention. But no colour of proof can be given hereunto; for it is directly contrary unto express Scripture rule, to the example of the apostolical churches,

and unheard of in the world, before the branded usurpation of Victor, bishop of Rome. An assertion of it, is to prostitute the wisdom, authority, and love of Christ towards his disciples, unto the wills of men, oftentimes prepossessed with darkness, ignorance, and superstition, and other lusts, as shall be more fully manifested, if there be occasion. Let any colour be given unto this supposition from Scripture or antiquity, and the whole cause shall be given up; yet thus is it, and no otherwise, in the matter of the present excommunications; persons of all sorts, every way sound in the faith, unreprovable in the catholic worship of the gospel, professing love and obedience unto Jesus Christ, without blame, are excluded, what lies in them, who manage these ordinances of divine worship, which the Lord Christ hath appointed and enjoined, without pretence of any other cause or reason, but only their not observance, in that worship, of what he hath not appointed. He that can believe this to be the will of Christ, neither knoweth him, nor his will, as it is revealed in his word; and the consciences of men are sufficiently secure from being concerned in that, wherein such an open defiance is bid unto evangelical precepts and rules, with apostolical examples.

And farther, to manifest the iniquity of these proceedings, whilst these dissenters are thus dealt withal, all sorts of persons, ignorant, profane, haters of godliness, and openly wicked in their lives, are allowed in the full communion of the church, without any disciplinary admonition or control. But as this serves to acquit them from any concernment in what is done against them, so nothing can be invented that tends more directly to harden men in their sins and impenitency; for whilst there is a pretence of church censures, they will be apt to think that they are sufficiently approved of Christ and the church, seeing their displeasure is no way declared against them; so they are not dissenters, they have reason to judge that they are safe here, and shall be so to eternity; let them look to themselves who deserve to be excommunicated. Is this the rule of the gospel? Is this the discipline of Christ? Is this the representation of his future judgment? Is this the way and manner of the exercise of his authority in the church, a declaration of what he owns, and what alone he disavows?

God forbid that such thoughts should have any countenance given unto them. Ecclesiastical laws have been always looked on as cobwebs, that catch the smaller flies, whilst the greater break them at their pleasure; but amongst those lesser, to spare those that are noxious or poisonous, and to cast the net over the innocent and harmless, is that which the spider gives no pattern of, nor can imitate.

I shall not mention the avowed end and design of these present excommunications; only I shall say, they are such, as many good men tremble to consider the horrible profanation of things sacred which they manifest to be in them.

There are also many other things which evidence the nullity of these proceedings, which may be pleaded if there be occasion; what hath already been spoken, is abundantly sufficient to satisfy my engagement unto you, namely, that the consciences of men are not at all concerned in the present excommunications.

It may be it will be said, that all this while we have been doing just nothing, or that which is to no purpose at all, as not concerning the present case; for these of whom we treat, pretend no power in 'foro interiori,' or the court of conscience, or unto nothing that should immediately affect it. Their authority is only in 'foro exteriori,' in the court of the church, which it seems is at Doctors' Commons: wherefore by their sentence of excommunication they oblige men only unto their outward concernments; as unto what concerns conscience, they leave that unto the preachers of the word. It may be, it will be so pleaded; but before they quit their hands well of this business, they will understand, that excommunication itself is nothing but an especial way of the application of the word unto the consciences of sinners, unto their edification; and that which is not so, pretend what it will, is nothing at all; unto the dispensers, therefore, of the word it doth alone belong: and whereas the apostle tell us, that the weapons of our Christian warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ; they seem herein to say, that the weapons of their warfare are carnal and mighty, through the aid of some body, to cast men into prison, or to bring their persons into captivity. And indeed this outward court of theirs, is part of that court without the temple,

which is trodden down by the Gentiles, and shall not be measured in the restoration of the worship of God; yea, the distinction itself is silly, if any thing be intended by this outward court, but only the outward declaration of what is, or is supposed to be, effected in the inward, or the mind and consciences of men. But let it be what it will, those who have neither name, nor place, nor office in the church by divine institution, who attend not at all in what they do unto any rule of the Scripture; nor can, nor do pretend any authority from Christ, in and for what they do, are no way to be heeded in this matter, but only as the instruments of external compulsion, which, for the sake of the public peace, is to be submitted unto with quietness and patience.

I find, I confess, by the books with me, sent us weekly into the country, that in this state of things some of the reverend clergy do manifest great compassion towards the dissenters, in writing and publishing many discourses containing persuasives unto, and arguments for conformity, whereby they may be freed from their troublesome circumstances; but I must needs commend their prudence in the choice of the season for this work, as much as their charity in the work itself. For the conformity they press need no other recommendation at this time; nor need they use any other arguments for it, but only that it is better than being hanged, or kept in perpetual durance, or stifled in prisons, or beggared, they and their families, or be starved in exile. And it hath been always observed, that arguments which march with halberts, bills, staves, serjeants, bailiffs, writs, warrants, and capiases, are very forcible and prevalent.

But I have done, and shall leave it unto others to declare what mischiefs do ensue on these proceedings, on civil accounts, and what an inroad is made by them on the government of the kingdom. For a new tenure is erected by them, whereon all men must hold their birthright privileges, especially that which is the root whereon they all do grow, namely, their personal liberty. They hold them no longer by the law of the land, nor can pretend unto security, whilst they forfeit them not by that law; they are all put into the power of chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, and officials; they may deprive them of them all at their pleasure, against the protection of that law under which they are born,

and which hath been looked on as the only rule and measure of the subject's liberties, privileges, and possessions. These things tend not only to the disturbance, but the ruin of all peace and trust among men, and of all good government in the world.

And if they should excommunicate all that by the law of Christ are to be excommunicated on the one hand, and all that are to be so by their own law on the other, and then procure capias's for them all, it is to be feared, the king might want subjects to defend his realms against his enemies, unless he should do as they did of old at Rome in great distresses, open the gaols, and arm the prisoners ; or, it may be, the lesser part would at length find it troublesome to keep the greater in prison. But these things concern not you nor me. I beg your excuse, as not knowing whether you will judge this hasty writing too little for the cause, or too much for a letter. As it is, accept it from, Sir,

Your, &c.
J. O.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE ADMINISTRATION

OF

CHURCH CENSURES.

A DISCOURSE,

&c.

Question 1. MAY a true church of Christ err or mistake in the administration of church censures?

Answer. A true church of Christ may err or mistake in the administration of the censures, or any act of discipline; whereby members of it, who are true members of Christ, may be injured, and sundry other inconveniences may ensue. And this is not unduly supposed:

1. Because no particular church is absolutely infallible either in doctrine or administrations, especially in such points or things as overthrow not the foundation of faith or worship.

2. Because churches are more obnoxious and liable to error and mistake in their administrations and discipline, than in doctrine. For all doctrines of truth are absolutely determined and revealed in the Scripture, so that there is no principle, means, nor cause of mistake about them, but what is only in the minds of men that inquire into them and after them. But the administration of the censures of the church hath respect unto many fallible mediums, requiring testimonies, evidences, and circumstances, which of themselves may lead a church, acting in sincerity, into many mistakes; especially considering how much in the dark unto us for the most part are the principles, causes, and ends of actions; the frames of men's spirits in and after them; all which in such cases deserve much consideration.

3. Churches have erred in not administering the censures of the gospel, according unto order and their duty; 1 Cor. v. 2.

4. The experience of all ages confirms the truth of this supposition. The first church censure, after the death of the apostles, that is remaining on any record, was that of the church of Corinth against some of their elders; wherein

how they miscarried, is evident from the epistle of the church of Rome unto them about that matter.

Corollary. In case any question arise about the administration of any church censure in a church of Christ, it ought to be very jealous, lest it have in matter or manner miscarried therein; seeing absolutely they may do so, and seeing there are so many ways and means whereby they may actually be induced into mistakes.

Ques. 2. Is it necessary that such maladministrations be rectified?

Ans. It is necessary such maladministrations should be rectified, by some way or means of Christ's appointment. And it is so,

1. First on the part of the censures themselves. And that,

(1.) Because of their nullity; for they are null, and bind not.

[1.] 'In foro cœli.' They bind not in heaven; for the Lord Christ ratifieth nothing in heaven, but what is done in his name, by his commission, and according to his word. In some or all of which every maladministration faileth.

[2.] Not 'in foro conscientiæ:' for conscience is not bound, nor will bind, on mere external ecclesiastical authority, where the person is indeed free, and judgeth himself to be so according unto rule.

Only such censures may be said to bind for a season, in some cases, in the church, but that 'quoad ordinem exteriorem et mere ecclesiasticum,' with respect unto outward order, that the peace of the church be not troubled, until mistakes may be rectified; but not 'quoad ordinem internum et mere spiritualem,' with reference unto the dependance of the whole church on Christ the head.

(2.) Because of the consequents of them. Disadvantage to the gospel, prejudice to the ways of Christ, and the utter impairing the authority of all church censures must needs ensue, if there be no way to rectify such mistakes, or if they are left unrectified; as may easily be manifested.

2. This is also necessary on the part of the church supposed to have erred. For whereas all church power is for edification, that which is unduly put forth and exercised, is rather for destruction; the guilt whereof every church ought to rejoice in being delivered from; especially con-

sidering that there is much more evil in condemning the righteous, than in acquitting the wicked, though both of them be an abomination.

3. On the part of the persons unduly or unjustly separated from the church by such censures. This is so evident that it needs no confirmation.

4. On the account of all other churches holding communion with the church which hath (as it is supposed to have) miscarried. The reasons hereof will afterward be made to appear.

Corol. This relief, by what means soever it is to be obtained, is of great use to the churches of Christ, and of great concernment unto their peace and edification.

Ques. 3. How may such administrations be rectified?

Ans. The rectifying such maladministrations may be (and is ordinarily no otherwise to be expected) by the advice and counsel of other churches, walking in the same fellowship and ordinances of the gospel with that church so failing as is supposed. And this to be given upon the hearing and understanding of the whole proceedings of that church in the administration supposed irregular.

This being the principal thing aimed at, must be farther considered. And,

1. The way, or means, whereby other churches come to the knowledge of such supposed miscarriages in any church of their communion, may be considered. Now this is either,

(1.) By public report. So the Israelites took notice of the fact of the Reubenites and Gadites in building an altar, which thereupon they sent to inquire about: 'They heard say they had done it;' Josh. xxii. 11. So the apostle took notice of the miscarriage of the church of Corinth in the case of the incestuous person; 1 Cor. v. 5. And this is a sufficient ground of inquiry, or of desiring an account of any church, in such cases.

(2.) By information of particular persons, whom they judge holy and faithful. So the apostle took notice of the dissensions in the church of Corinth: 'They were declared unto him by them of the house of Cloe;' 1 Cor. i. 11.

(3.) By an account given unto them by any church, requiring their advice in any case of difficulty, either before or after the administration of censures. So the church at

Antioch gave an account of their troubles and differences to the church at Jerusalem; Acts xv.

(4.) By the addresses of the persons injured, or supposing themselves to be so; which to make, whilst they judge themselves innocent, is their indispensable duty; either directly, by seeking advice or counsel from them; or by desiring admission into the fellowship of the gospel with them, which they cannot grant, without an inquiry into the causes of their separation from any other church, or society.

Corol. Where there is a concurrence of the most ways or means of information, there ought to be the more diligence in the inquiry.

Hence it follows, that it is the duty of churches walking in the same order and fellowship of the gospel, upon such information or complaint, as beforementioned, of any undue administration of church censures, especially of excommunication by any church amongst themselves, to inquire by their messengers into the cause and manner of it, to the end that they may give their joint advice and counsel in the matter. And it is the duty of the church complained of, or informed against, to give them an account of all their proceedings in that case, with their reasons for their procedure, and to hearken unto and consider the advice that shall be offered and given unto them.

2. This will appear sufficiently confirmed, if we consider, in order unto a right judgment of the grounds whereon this way and practice is asserted,

(1.) That this advice of churches in communion to be given and taken, is no ordinary or standing ordinance of the church as to its practice, though it be as unto its right; but is only to be made use of in extraordinary cases, and such as should not occur, although they will; and for this cause it is more sparingly mentioned in the Scripture.

(2.) That it is, and may be fully proved to be, the duty of all churches, by previous advice with other churches in cases of difficulty, to prevent this consequent counsel, which being after a sentence given, must needs be attended with many difficulties.

(3.) That the practice of the churches, as to discipline, is no longer recorded in the Scripture, than they had the direction and help of the apostles, which supplied all extra-

ordinary emergencies among them: so that many instances of this practice amongst them are not to be expected, and it is of the care and wisdom of our Lord Jesus that we have any.

(4.) That we must here be contented with such arguments and testimonies, as we act upon in other ordinances and things belonging to the worship and order of the churches; such as the distribution of elders into teaching and ruling, the administration of the sacraments by officers only, gesture in the sacrament of the supper, observation of the first day of the week, and the like.

These things being premised, the order above expressed is confirmed,

I. From the light and law of nature, with the unalterable reason of the thing itself. Hence are churches directed into this order and practice.

There is somewhat that is moral in all ordinances. Some of them are wholly so as to their matter and substance, and founded in the light of nature, being only directed as to their principle, manner, and end, in the gospel; such is excommunication itself, as might easily be made to appear. And from hence a direction unto duty, and an indispensable obligation unto obedience doth arise. That which is moral in any ordinance doth no less oblige us to an observation of it, than that which is of mere institution. And it obligeth us because it is moral. And the Lord Christ being in all things the Lord of our consciences, what we do therein, we do it in obedience unto him.

Now that the order established is thus grounded and warranted, appears by the ensuing rules, taken from the light of nature.

1. 'Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari debet.' All men are to consider that wherein the concernment of all doth lie, according to their respective interests. What is the ground and reason why all the members of a church do consider, determine, give their counsel and consent, in the case of any persons being cast out of their society? It is warranted by virtue of this rule. They all have communion with such a person, and must all withdraw communion from him, and therefore must consider the reason of his excision or cutting off. Now a church in its censures doth not eject

any one from the enjoyment of ordinances numerically only, that is, in that one society; but specifically, that is, from the ordinances of Christ in all churches. Hence it becomes the concernment of other churches, even as many as the person ejected may seek communion from; and therefore it is to be considered by them, with respect unto their own duty of walking towards him.

2. 'Cujus est judicare, ejus est cognoscere.' Whoever is to judge, is to take cognizance of the fact, and the reason of it. This is to be done according to the several interests that men may have in the matter under consideration; which in some is of jurisdiction, which in this case we admit not of; in others of counsel and advice. Now other churches are not allowed in this case to be merely passive and indifferent, but must make a determination in it. This is evident on supposition of the injured person's offering himself to their communion: for they must reject him, or receive him. In both they judge, and therein must take cognizance by hearing the matter from the church; and so on both sides. And unless this be allowed, no church can or ought to expect, that any other church will reject from communion any whom they reject, merely because they are rejected; unless they suppose their judgment to be absolutely a rule unto any other churches to walk by, in their observation of the commands and institutions of Christ.

3. On the part of the persons supposed to be injured, every man by the law of nature is obliged to undertake 'inculpatam sui tutelam,' the just defence of his own innocency, by all lawful ways and means. And as absolutely the way, means, and measure of this defence is left unto a man's own prudence; so there is a rule given unto it, wherever the glory of God or of the good of his neighbour is concerned: if either of these suffer by his wrong, he is obliged to vindicate his own innocency, nor is at liberty to suffer false imputations to lie upon him. It is in such cases a man's sin not to do so. And in the case under consideration this can be done only by an address unto other persons, for their assistance according to their interest. An interest of jurisdiction in civil courts, or in churches, in this case there is none. The interest of private persons herein is of compassion, prayer, and private advice; the interest of churches is a cog-

nizance of the cause, with advice and judgment thereon. And for persons or churches not to give assistance in this case, according to the truth and equity, is their sin.

That these are principles of the light of nature, and the natural reason of such things, appears from the general allowance of them so to be, and their constant practice amongst all men, walking according to that light and law.

Corol. If churches, as they are assemblies and societies of men in communion for the same end, observe not the indispensable rules of societies, they cannot, as such, be ordinarily preserved in their being and communion.

II. The way and order laid down is directed unto, warranted, and confirmed by general rules of the Scripture.

1. On the part of the church supposed to err in its administrations.

There are sundry general rules, which declare it to be their duty to give an account unto other churches, of their proceedings therein, and to consider their advice. Some of these may be named. As,

(1.) That 'they give none offence to the churches of God;' 1 Cor. x. 32. 'Give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed;' 2 Cor. vi. 3. Upon a supposition, or information, or complaint of maladministration of any ordinance, offence may be taken, and that, if accompanied (as it may be) with much appearing evidence, justly. And in this case the church hath no way to clear itself from having indeed given offence, but by giving an account of their proceedings and the reason thereof. And without this it cannot be avoided, but that offences will be multiplied amongst the churches of Christ, and that to the utter ruin of their mutual communion. Thus when Peter, by the special command and direction of God, went and preached the gospel to the Gentiles, many, not knowing the grounds of his so doing, nor his warrant for it, took offence at it, and charged him with irregular walking, Acts xi. 2, 3. In this case, he doth not defend himself by his apostolical authority and privilege, nor in a few words tell them he had a warrant for what he did; but to remove all doubts, questions, and causes of offence, he distinctly repeats the whole matter, and all the circumstances of it: an example of so great importance, that the Holy Ghost thought meet at large to express

his account and defence, though the matter of it was set down immediately before; Acts x. and xi.

(2.) That they 'be ready always to give an answer (that is, an account) of the hope that is in them (and consequently of their practice suitable thereunto) with meekness and fear,' 1 Pet. iii. 15. This proves it a 'minore ad majus:' if they should be ready thus to answer every man, much more many churches of God, and that in and about things of their mutual edification.

(3.) That in particular they clear themselves, when suffering under any imputation, or being in danger of so doing. 'What carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves: in all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter;' 2 Cor. vii. 11. And this on many accounts is the duty of a church in the case proposed: the glory of God, the honour of Christ, their own peace and edification, with the peace and credit of all other churches, require it of them. Nor can this duty be any otherwise performed, but by this giving an account of their own proceedings, and receiving the advice of other churches therein. And if this be not done freely, with readiness and submission of mind, there is no way left to preserve the peace and communion of churches. Those who suppose they may in such cases act in a way of jurisdiction and church-power, can attain the end by them aimed at, by virtue of the censures which they do administer. But in this way of counsel and advice, unless those who are concerned to give an account of themselves, will do it with meekness, gentleness, mutual trust and confidence suitable unto the conduct of the Spirit of Christ, in obedience unto his institutions, the whole end of it will be in danger to be frustrated.

2. On the part of other churches.

(1.) All churches, walking in the same order and fellowship of the gospel, are mutually debtors to each other for their good and edification. 'Their debtors they are;' Rom. xv. 27. And this debt in this case can no otherwise be paid, but by the way prescribed.

(2.) What the apostles did, might do, and ought to do, towards one another, who were all equal by virtue of their common interest in the same work, that one church may do, and ought to do, towards another, or many churches towards

one: but one apostle might take cognizance of the ways and walking of another, and withstand, advise, or reprove him, if in any thing he failed, and walked not with a right foot; Gal. ii. 11, 14, 15.

Corol. General rules, containingthe grounds and reasons of particular institutions, are sure guidance and direction in and unto their observation.

III. The way and order expressed is warranted by necessity; as that without which the peace of communion and edification of the churches cannot be preserved and carried on. As,

1. On the part of the church whose administrations are questioned. The persons censured (which is ordinary) may, in their own vindication, or by way of undue reflection, not to be discovered without a just examination, impair their reputation with other churches, or many members of them, whereby it may suffer and be exposed to sundry inconveniences. In this case a church can have no relief, but by reporting the matter unto other churches, so seeking their advice and counsel, whereby they may receive great encouragement, comfort, and boldness in the Lord, if found to have proceeded according unto rule.

2. On the part of other churches. A church may either causelessly, or with just cause, cast out or withdraw communion from such a number of their members, as bearing themselves on their own innocency and right, may continue in a society, and plead that the power, authority, and privilege of the church doth abide with them. How in this case shall other churches know with which of these societies they may and ought to hold communion, unless they may and ought to examine and consider the causes of the dissension between them? And they may justly, and ought to withhold communion from that party of them, which shall refuse to tender their case unto such consideration.

3. On the part of the persons supposed to be injured; and that either for their restoration, or their conviction and humiliation. For,

(1.) If they are innocent, it is meet that they should be heard, as the Israelites heard the Reubenites; and necessary that they should be restored. Now it being supposed that the church which hath rejected them, will not rescind their

own act without new light and evidence, which for many reasons is not like to spring from among themselves; this is the only way left for that necessary relief, which the Lord Christ requires to be given. For what is our duty towards a person repenting, in reference to his restoration, is certainly our duty towards a person who hath not sinned, when his innocency shall be discovered.

(2.) For their conviction and humiliation, if they be found offenders. Whilst they see not the right regularity of the church's proceedings with them; whilst they are able to justify themselves in their own consciences, and their hearts condemn them not, it is not to be expected that the sentence of excommunication, which works only by the means of men's light and conviction, will have its effect upon them. But when there shall be the concurrence of many churches, in the approbation of the censure inflicted on them, which probably will be accompanied with a contribution of new light and conviction, it is a most useful means to bring them to humiliation and repentance. It was an aggravation of the censure inflicted on the incestuous Corinthian, that it was given out against him by many, 2 Cor. ii. 6. that is, by the common consent of the church: and it will add thereunto, when the censure shall be confirmed and approved by the concurrent advice of many churches.

Corol. The Lord Christ having provided all things necessary for the peace and edification of his church, in all things that are evidently of that importance, his mind and will is diligently to be inquired after.

IV. This whole order and practice is grounded on especial warrant and approbation, recorded Acts xv. Concerning which we may observe,

1. That the occasion there mentioned fell out in the providence of God, and the practice upon it was guided by the Holy Ghost, that it might be an example and rule for the churches of Christ, in cases of a like concernment unto them in all ages, and so hath the force and warranty of an institution. As it was in the case that gave occasion unto deacons, Acts iv. a matter of fact, wherein was some disorder, rectified by a practice answering the necessity of the churches, became an institution for order in all future ages.

2. That in that synod things were not determined by im-

mediate inspiration, but the truth was searched out, and the mind of the Holy Ghost searched into by reasonings, arguings, and the consideration of Scripture testimonies, whereby they were guided in the conclusion and determination.

3. That the institution and rule given is not in its exercise to be confined to that particular case and instance there mentioned (which to do would overthrow many other rules and observations which we admit), but it is to be extended, in proportion and parity of reason, unto all cases of a like nature. For the reason of any law is the rule of its interpretation; and so it is of any institution. That that which gives offence and trouble unto any church, that wherein many churches are concerned, that which in any church hinders edification, and disturbs the faith or peace of any of its members, whether it be in doctrine or practice, that is not, or cannot be composed in any one church, should be considered, advised upon, and determined by more churches holding communion together, and meetings for that purpose by their messengers, is the sense, meaning, design, and importance of this institution.

Corol. To deny an institution of so great necessity to the peace and edification of the churches, will give great countenance unto men, who supposing such defects, are ready to supply them with their own inventions.

V. The order asserted is confirmed by the practice of the first churches, after the decease of the apostles. For when the church of Corinth had by an undue exercise of discipline deposed some of their elders, the church of Rome taking cognizance of it, wrote unto them, reproving their rashness, and advised their restoration. And when the church of Antioch was afterward troubled with the pride and false opinions of Paulus Samosatenus, the neighbouring bishops or elders came unto the church, and joined their consent in his deposition.

Some things are, or may be, objected unto this course of proceeding amongst the churches of Christ, which shall therefore be briefly considered and answered.

Objection 1. This way of proceeding will abridge the liberty, and destroy the privileges, of particular churches, which ought to be carefully preserved as the ground and foundation of the whole superstruction of church-order.

Ans. 1. Particular churches have certainly no liberties or privileges, that are inconsistent with, and do contradict either the light of nature, moral equity, general rules of the Scripture, or the reasons and ends of all institutions, and of the edification of the whole body of Christ. And on these, as hath been declared, is this way and course of proceeding grounded.

2. Other churches taking care about their own concernments and duty according to the will and appointment of Christ, namely, in considering whom they receive into, and whom they are to deny communion unto, with the cause thereof, do not, nor can truly, abridge the liberties or privileges of any church whatever. For the duty of many churches will never interfere with the due liberty of any one. And this is all upon the matter that they do in this case; which must be granted them, unless we will say, that the actings of one church, and those, it may be, irregular, shall not only abridge all other churches of their liberty, but hinder them also from performing their duty.

3. I do not see how counsel and advice can abridge the liberty of any church or person. Certainly to guide, direct, and assist any in the acting of their liberty, is not to abridge it, but rather to strengthen it. For liberty acted not according to rule, is licentiousness. A man in the use of his liberty may be going to do himself some notable injury; he that shall stop him by counsel and persuasion, with the prevalency and authority of reason, doth not take away his liberty, but guides him aright in the use of it.

4. Wherein is the abridgment pretended? Is a church by this means hindered from the free use and acting of its own judgment, in taking in what members it seems good, in watching over them according to the rule, in admonishing, reproving, or casting them out, if they find just and sufficient cause so to do? To hinder or obstruct a church in any of these acts or actings by any authority, sentence, or determination, by any act or acts whatever, is utterly disclaimed: so that this is but a pretence.

5. When a case hath difficulty in it, and such mostly, if not universally, have all cases, wherein there will be found the least appearance of a grievance in the execution of censures, or pretence for seeking redress; a church hath not

liberty, hath no privilege to secure it from previous seeking the advice of other churches, which is their duty by many rules of Scripture. We must not pretend unbounded liberty against known duty. And as a church doth not seek previous advice from other churches, that they may obtain power to execute their censures, which they have in themselves, no more doth this following advice any way cut them short in the use or execution of their power, but only direct them. And if a church have not this liberty by rule before censure in difficult cases, as it hath not, no more hath it after a censure, whereby the necessity of advice and counsel may be increased.

Obj. 2. This way of proceeding will erect a jurisdiction or judicature in some churches over others, which is not to be allowed.

So some have spoken, who have not, it may be, duly weighed either what jurisdiction, properly so called, is; or how great an evil it is to cast a reproach upon the right ways of the Lord. In answer I say,

Ans. Excommunication itself, whatever men may suppose, is no proper act of jurisdiction. For jurisdiction in any sense is an adjunct of office, and the acts of it are acts of office and power. But so is not excommunication; for it is not an authoritative act of the officers of the church, but a judicial sentence of the whole church. Now the whole church is not in office. The whole body is not an eye. What is then done by it, is no act of office power, but a declaration of a judgment according to especial institution. And if excommunication itself may be exercised without any jurisdiction, surely that exercise may be consulted and advised about, without any pretence thereunto.

2. To constitute a jurisdiction it is required that there be, first, an office power stated in them that claim it; and a duty in others on the same account to submit unto them; secondly, an authoritative acting by virtue of that office power, with an obligation from that authority, formally considered, unto obedience; with sundry other things, which in this matter are utterly disclaimed.

3. A right understanding of the true state of the question, of what is granted, and what asserted in this matter,

will, with them that love peace and truth, fully obviate such objections as these. For,

(1.) It is granted that all church-power and authority, for the administration of all the ordinances and institutions of the gospel, is intrusted with a particular congregation.

(2.) That there is no judicature, no church assembly, vested with church-power and authority, without, above, or beyond a particular church, that should either contribute authority unto such a church for its actings, or authoritatively control it in its actings, to order or change its proceeding in any thing, as by virtue of any authority received unto that purpose.

(3.) That in case any person be not satisfied with the administration of the church whereof he is a member, but finds himself aggrieved thereby, he cannot appeal unto any church, or churches, or assemblies of churches, as having power or authority to revoke or disannul the sentence or act of the church, wherewith he is offended; either in pretence that the church without their concurrence and consent had not power to pass any such act, or that they have authority to control their acts, or can on any account authoritatively interpose in their administrations.

(4.) It is then granted, that the power of excommunication in the preceding acts unto it, and full execution of it, is placed in a particular congregation, without respect unto any superior authority, but that of Christ and his word. These things are acknowledged; but that it should hence follow, that in case of supposed maladministration of ordinances, and the complaint of persons pretending to be injured thereby, other churches are not by virtue of Scripture rules, institution of our Lord Jesus, warrant of the light of nature, on their communion and common interest, to inquire into the matter, and take cognizance of it, that no offence be given or taken, that they may know how to discharge aright their duty towards both the church and the persons aggrieved, and give their advice in the common concernment of all the churches, there is no pretence to surmise. And for a church to say, that because they have power to do what they do, they will therefore in such things neither desire advice, nor take advice, nor hearken unto counsel, nor give ac-

count of their proceeding to them that are or may be offended, or that require an account of them, is scarce agreeable to the spirit of Christ, or rule of his word.

Obj. 3. This is the way to frustrate the sentence of excommunication, and to prevent the due efficacy of it upon persons censured, yea to harden them in their sin and offence.

Ans. 1. Concerning whom are these things feared? Were the advice mentioned, and the counsel to be had and given, to be among heathens, enemies of the church, or of the ways of Christ, or of the especial way and order of church fellowship, which in this discourse is supposed, such events might be feared. But to pretend to fear that other churches of Christ, walking in the same order and communion with ourselves, and whom we ought to look on in all things as like-minded with ourselves, as to their aim at the glory of God, and edification of the church, should by their counsel and advice frustrate the end of any ordinance of Christ, is a surmise that ought not to be indulged unto. Yea, we have herein cause to admire the wisdom, and bless the care, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath provided this help for us, to strengthen and confirm us in the ways of truth and righteousness, or to direct us where we are, or may be, mistaken.

2. Where excommunication is not administered but in a due manner, and for just causes, there will appear little trouble or difficulty in this matter. Let the cause or matter of it be as it ought to be, such a sin, or sins, as the mind or conscience of a believer, of an enlightened person free from open prejudices, will at first view condemn in himself and others, and this, or these sins, persisted in after due admonition; and there will indeed be left no pretence of grievance or complaint in those that are censured. But if it be administered in dubious cases, we shall find that this way of counsel is so far from being an obstruction of its efficacy, as that it is the only means to render it effectual.

3. No man will complain or address himself unto the relief declared, if he be convinced in his conscience that he is not injured, but that he is indeed guilty of the crimes charged on him, and that by Scripture rule they are such as deserve that censure. In this case no man will be so foolish or obstinate as to seek for relief. And if he should do so, he can possibly expect nothing, but to have his bonds

made strong. But now suppose that a person be not so convinced, neither before nor after sentence denounced against him, but looks on himself as innocent and injured, either in part, or in whole, in matter or manner of proceeding, what effect can be expected of his excommunication? We are deceived, if we look that this ordinance should have any effect upon men, but by the conviction of their minds and consciences. It worketh doctrinally only, though peculiarly by virtue of especial institution. And in this case it is evident how this way may farther, and that it cannot possibly obstruct, the effects of this censure, as was in part before declared.

4. The address being but once to be made, this is the only way to bind the guilty person, and that without delay, and to give him a sense of his sin; which it is supposed that before he had not.

5. It is our duty not to cast even persons that are excommunicated under new temptations. Now he that is aggrieved with the sentence denounced against him, and supposeth himself injured (which whilst he doth so, he cannot be humbled for his sin), if he supposeth he hath no way of relief left unto him, that is, that his case can no more come under advice or counsel, he will be exposed unto temptations to irregular ways, and so cast off the yoke which he supposeth grievous and injurious.

Obj. 4. The pattern urged for this course of proceeding, Acts xv. concerneth only doctrines, and not the administration of censures, which was not then nor there in question. And therefore in the like case only may the like course be taken.

Ans. 1. The way of mutual counsel and advice amongst churches, pleaded for, is not built only upon that instance and example, as hath before been evinced. There are many more grounds of it, reasons for it, and directions about it, than what are, or can be, comprised in any one particular instance.

2. There is frequently, if not always, some doctrinal mistake in the bottom of all maladministration. For whereas the nature of the sin proceeded against, and the rule proceeded by, ought in the first place to be doctrinally and dogmatically stated, here usually is the beginning of

the mistake and error of any church. This therefore falls confessedly under that example of Acts xv.

3. Though that assembly made a doctrinal determination of the things in difference, yet the formal reason of the consideration of those things was the offence that was given, and that the churches were troubled. So that the pattern is to be extended unto all things whereby the peace of the church is disturbed.

4. Maladministration may tend to the subversion of the church, and the ruin of the souls of men, no less than false doctrines. As, suppose a church should admit known Arians or Socinians into their society, supposing they have liberty so to do, may not other churches both consider the fact, and unless they alter their proceeding, withhold communion from them? Instances innumerable of the same kind may be given.

Obj. 5. Churches have the sole power of admitting members into their society; by virtue of which admission they are not only received into a participation of the privileges of the church in that particular society whereof they are members, but also into the communion of all other churches of Christ. Now this is daily practised by churches, without any farther inspection into their actions by others. Those admitted are received upon their testimony into their admission. And why shall not churches have the same trust reposed in them, as to the exclusion of any members from them; and expect that their testimony alone in the fact should satisfy, for their exclusion from all other churches, and their communion?

Ans. 1. The cases indeed are parallel, and the power of every church is no less for the exclusion of any of their members, than for their admission. Nor ought their testimony to be of less weight in the one, than in the other.

2. Ordinarily, and where there is no ground of farther consideration, the actings of a church of Christ in both these cases are, and ought to be granted and taken to be, according unto rule; so that other churches do acquiesce as to their concernments in the judgment of all the several churches of their communion.

3. There may be mistakes in admission, as well as in the exclusion of members. And some there are, who do very

much scruple complete communion with many churches, principally upon this account, that they proceed not on right grounds in their admission of members; and such cannot but grant, that on occasion the grounds of their own admissions may, and ought to be, questioned and examined.

4. No church hath such an absolute power in the admission of members, but that in cases of difficulty, and such as may in their determination one way or other give offence, they are bound to seek, and to take the advice of other churches with whom they hold communion.

5. Suppose it be reported or intimated by any of the ways that were before mentioned, that a church in communion with others, had admitted into their society an Arian, or Socinian, a seducer, or a person of a flagitious life, given to corrupt the manners of others; shall not the other churches of the same communion, to whom the matter is so reported or declared, and who are offended thereat, require an account of the church's proceeding therein, to know whether it be as it is reported, or no? And is not that church, so represented or reported of, obliged to give a full and punctual account of their proceedings, and to receive advice thereupon? Let any consider the instances before given, the nature of the thing itself, the rule of the Scripture in such cases, and determine. The case is directly the same as to excommunication. 'But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God;' 1 Cor. xi. 16.

AN

ANSWER UNTO TWO QUESTIONS:

WITH

TWELVE ARGUMENTS

AGAINST

ANY CONFORMITY TO WORSHIP,

NOT OF

DIVINE INSTITUTION.

Should you not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets? Zech. vii. 7.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. Rom. xiv. 22.

AN

ANSWER UNTO TWO QUESTIONS.

QUESTION I.

WHETHER persons, who have engaged unto reformation, and another way of divine worship, according to the word of God, as they believe, may lawfully go unto, and attend on, the use of the common-prayer book in divine worship?

ANSWER.

1. We suppose herein, all that hath been pleaded against that kind of service, as to its matter, form, imposition, use, end, and consequents; which are all of them duly to be considered, before the practice inquired after can be allowed. But,

2. The present question is not about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of forms of prayer in general; nor about the lawfulness of that form, or those forms, which are prescribed in the common-prayer book, as unto their matter and manner of composure, absolutely considered; nor yet about the expediency of the whole system of worship limited thereunto: but it respects all these things, and the like, with reference unto the persons described in the inquiry. And as unto the persons intended in the inquiry, we judge this practice unlawful unto them, as contrary under sundry rules of the Scripture, and wherein it is condemned.

1. It is contrary unto that general rule, in these cases given us by the apostle, Gal. ii. 18. 'If I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' To destroy or dissolve any thing in the worship of God, is, to lay it aside, and remove it out of that worship, as that which we have no divine obligation unto. So the apostle destroyed the legal ceremonies whereof he there speaks, and no otherwise. To build again, is to admit into the worship of God

as useful unto the edification of the church. And these are contrary, so as that, if the one be a duty, the other in the same case, or with respect unto the same things, is a sin. If it were a duty to destroy, it is a sin to build; and if it be a duty to build, it was a sin to destroy. He that doth both, makes himself unavoidably a transgressor.

But we have in this sense, as unto ourselves, destroyed this form of worship; that is, we have omitted it, and left it out in the service of the church, as that which we had no divine obligation unto, and as that which was not unto edification: if we now build it again, as it is done in the practice inquired after, we make ourselves transgressors, either by destroying or building.

And there is strength added unto this consideration, in case that we have suffered any thing on the account of the forbearance of it; as the same apostle speaks in the same case, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain;' Gal. iii. 4. It is a great folly to lose our own sufferings: 'Are ye so foolish?' ver. 3.

2. It is contrary unto that great rule, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,' Rom. xiv. 23. For that any thing which a man doth in the worship of God may be of faith, it is necesssary that he be convinced or persuaded that it is his duty so to do; Mat. xxviii. 20. Isa. i. 12. Deut. iv. 2.

It is no rule in the worship of God, that we should do what we can, or that we have a liberty to do this or that, which we yet suppose, all circumstances considered, that we are not divinely obliged to do. In all things in general, and in particular duties or instances, we must have an obligation on our consciences, from the authority of God, that so we ought to do, and that our not doing of it is a neglect of a duty, or it is not of faith. The performance of any thing in the worship of God, hath in it the formal nature of a duty given it, by its respect unto divine authority. For a duty to God, that is not an act of obedience with respect unto his authority, is a contradiction.

Wherefore, no man can (that is, lawfully and without sin) go to, and attend on this kind of religious worship, but he who judgeth his so doing to be a duty that God requireth of him, and which it would be his sin to omit every time he goes unto it. God will not accept of any service

from us on other terms. Whether this be the judgment of those who make the inquiry as unto what they do, they may do well to consider.

3. It is contrary to the rule delivered, Mal. i. 13, 14. 'Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts.' We are obliged by all divine laws, natural, moral and positive, to serve God always with our best. The obligations hereunto are inseparable from all just conceptions of the divine nature, and our relation thereunto. No man can think aright of God, and that it is his duty to serve him, but must think it to be so with the best that he hath. To offer him any thing when we have that which is better, or which we judge to be better, is an act of profaneness and not obedience. In all sacrifices, the blood and the fat were to be offered unto God. Wherefore he that attends unto this service, doth avow to God that it is the best that he hath, and if it be not so, he is a deceiver.

If it be objected hereon, that by virtue of this rule so understood, as that we are always obliged to the use of that which we judge best in the worship of God, we are bound to leave this or that ministry or church, if we judge that the administrations are better amongst others; it is answered, that the rule respects not degrees, where the whole administration is according to the mind of God, but different kinds of worship, as worshipping by a limited prescribed form, and worshipping by the assistance of the Spirit of God, are.

4. It is contrary unto that rule, 'Let all things be done to edifying;' 1 Cor. xiv. 26. Whatsoever doth not promote edification is excluded out of the worship of the church by virtue of this rule. Nor can it be a duty in us to give countenance thereunto, or to make use of it. It is said, that prayer is the worship of God; these forms of it are only a determination of the manner of it, or an outward means of that worship. Let it be supposed; although it be certain that as prescribed they are parts of the service. They are therefore means that are an help and furtherance unto edification in prayer, or they are an hinderance of it; or

they are of no use or signification one way or the other. If it be said, that they are an help unto edification, and are found so by experience, in the exclusion of any other way of worship; then I ask, why they are not constantly used? Why do we at any time, in any place, refuse the aid and help of them, unto this great end, of all things that are done in the church? But this can be pleaded only by those who contend for the constant use of them in the worship of God, with whom at present we are not concerned.

If it be acknowledged, that indeed they are an hinderance unto edification, which is more promoted without them, yet are they not in themselves unlawful; I say as before, that is not the present question. We inquire only, whether the use of them by those who judge them hinderances unto edification, be not contrary to the rule mentioned, 'Let all things be done unto edifying.' For the things of the third sort that are of no use, nor signification at all, they can have no place, nor be of any consideration, in the worship of God.

5. It is inconsistent with that sincerity in profession that is required of us. Our public conjunction with others in acts and duties of religious worship, is a part of that profession which we make; and our whole profession is nothing but the declaration of the subjection of our souls unto the authority of Christ, according unto the gospel. Wherefore, in this conjunction in worship we do profess, that it is divinely required of us, and that it is part of that obedience which we owe to Jesus Christ. And if we do not so judge it, we are hypocritical in what we do, or the profession that we make; and to deny that our practice is our profession in the sight of God and men, is to introduce all manner of licentiousness into religion.

6. Such a practice is in very many instances contrary unto the great rule of not giving offence. For it is unavoidable, but that many will be given and taken, and some of them of pernicious consequence unto the souls of men. In particular,

First, 'Woe will be unto the world because of these offences.' For hence our adversaries will take occasion to justify themselves, in their most false and injurious charges against dissenters, unto the hardening of them in their ways. As, (1.) They accuse them as factious and seditious, in that

they will not do what they can do, and what by the present practice they own to be the mind of God, that they should do (or else expressly play the hypocrites) for the sake of peace, order, and obedience unto magistrates. (2.) That they pretend conscience, wherein indeed it is not concerned in their own judgment, seeing on outward considerations, which conscience can have no regard unto, they can do what is required. On these apprehensions they will justify themselves in their security, and harden themselves in their sins, it may be to their perdition. Woe be unto them by whom such offences come!

Secondly, By this practice, we cast in our suffrage on the part of persecutors against the present sufferers in the nation. For we justify what is done against them, and condemn them in their sufferings, as having no just cause or warranty for what they do; as we declare by our practice of what they refused. There is no man who complies in this matter, but it is a part of his profession, that those who refuse so to do, and are exposed to sufferings thereon, do not suffer according to the will of God, nor do their sufferings redound unto his glory. And no offence or scandal can be of an higher nature!

Thirdly, Differences and divisions will on this practice unavoidably arise between churches themselves, and members of the same church, which will be attended with innumerable evil consequents unto the dishonour of the gospel, and it may be to the loss of all church communion.

Fourthly, Many will be induced, on the example of others, especially if they be persons of any reputation in the church, who shall so practise, to follow them against their own light, having the great weight of the preservation of their liberties and goods lying on the same side. And experience will quickly shew what will be the event hereof, either in total apostasy, or that terror of conscience which they will find no easy relief under, as it hath fallen out with some already. And,

Fifthly, It is a justification of our adversaries in the cause wherein we are engaged (1.) In their church-state. (2.) In a reading ministry. (3.) In their casting us out of communion on the present terms. (4.) In their judgment concerning us in the point of schism, as might easily be manifested.

Lastly, There is in this practice a visible compliance with the design of the prescription of this form of service, unto the sole use of the church in the duties of divine worship. And this, in the nature of the thing itself, is an exclusion of the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in that worship, which is given and continued by Christ to this very end, that the church may be edified in divine worship, and the due performance of it. And whether this answers our loyalty unto Christ in his kingly office, ought to be well inquired into.

And we shall hereby, on a mere act of outward force, join with them in church communion, who have cast us out of their communion, by the imposition of principles and practices in divine worship, no way warranted by the Scripture, or authority of Christ: who allow us no church-state among ourselves; nor will join in any one act of church communion with us! Who persecute us even unto death, and will not be satisfied with any compliance, without a total renunciation of our principles and practice in the worship of God, and giving away our whole cause about the state of the church, and other divine institutions! Besides, at present we shall seem to be influenced by a respect unto their excommunications, which, as they are managed and administered at present, are not only an high profanation of a sacred ordinance, but suited to expose Christian religion unto scorn and contempt.

QUESTION H.

A SECOND inquiry is, whether the persons before mentioned and described, may lawfully and in a consistency with, or within a renunciation of, their former principles and practice, go to, and receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the parish churches, under their present constitution and administration?

ANSWER.

It appears that they may not, or cannot so do. For,

1. Their so doing, would be an ecclesiastical incorporation in the church, wherein they do partake: for a voluntary conjunction in the highest act of communion with any church, according to its order and institutions, warranted by its own authority, is an express incorporation with it; whereby a man is constituted a formal member of it, unto all ends and purposes of privilege, right, and duty. The church-state is owned hereby, its authority submitted unto in its right and exercise; nor is it otherwise interpreted of them unto whom they so join themselves. But this is a virtual, yea, an express renunciation of their own present church-state in any other society, and necessitates a relinquishment of their former practice.

It will be said, that a member of one particular church may partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper in another, without incorporating or becoming a stated member of that church wherein he doth so partake.

It is answered, that he may do so by virtue of that communion, which is between the church whereof he is a member, and that church wherein he doth so partake. For he is admitted unto that participation by virtue of that communion, and not on his own personal account. If it be otherwise, where any one is received unto the participation of this ordinance, there he is admitted unto entire membership, and is engaged unto all the duties thereunto belonging.

And thus is it in this case, for those unto whom they join themselves herein, if but occasionally, do, (1.) Own no church-state in this nation but their own. (2.) Admit of none unto this sacrament, by virtue of their communion with any other church, or any churches not of their own constitution.

Nor, (3.) Will administer it unto any, but those whom they claim to be their own, as living in their parishes, in opposition unto any other church-state whatever.

Wherefore it is impossible that any man should be a member of one church, and communicate in this ordinance in another, which condemns that whereof he is as schismatical, and receiveth him as one belonging unto itself only, but he doth professedly renounce the communion of that church wherein he was; and is by them that receive him, esteemed so to do! And no reserves of a contrary judgment, or resolution in his own mind, will relieve any man in conscience or reputation against the testimony of his practical profession.

2. They do hereby profess a spiritual incorporation with those, or that church wherein they do so communicate; namely, that they are one body and one bread with them; that they all drink into one spirit; Cor. x. 17. xii. 13. How they can do this in those places where they judge the generality of them to be profane and ignorant, without sinning against their own light, is not to be understood.

It is said, that no persons in this or any other ordinance of divine worship, are polluted, or made guilty, by the sins of others, with whom they do communicate. It is answered, that this is not at present inquired into. That which such persons are charged with, is their own sins only, in making a profession of spiritual incorporation, or becoming of one body, one bread with them, and of drinking into the same spirit with them, when they do not esteem them so to be, in the exercise of love without dissimulation. The neglect also of other express duties, which we owe unto those, who stand in that union with us, will necessarily follow hereon. Neither do such persons, as so communicate, intend to take on themselves an obligation unto all those duties which are required of them, towards those with whom they profess themselves to be one spiritual body, which is an open prevarication against Scripture rule.

3. They would hereby not only justify the whole service of the liturgy, but the ceremonies also enjoined to be used in the administration of this sacrament. For the rule of the church wherewith they join, is that whereby they are to be judged. Any abatement that may be made of them in practice, is on both sides an unwarrantable self-deceiving,

inconsistent with Christian ingenuity and sincerity. But hereby they do not only condemn all other present dissenters, but all those also of former days and ages, ministers and others, who suffered under deprivation, imprisonment, and banishment, in their testimony against them.

If they shall say they do not approve what is practised by others, though they join in the same worship and duties of it with them; I say this is contrary to the language of their profession, unto Scripture rule; Rom. xiv. 22. and is indefensible in the sight of God and good men, and unworthy of that plain, open, bold sincerity, which the gospel requireth in the professors of it.

4. The posture of kneeling in the receiving of this sacrament, is a peculiar act of religious adoration, which hath no divine institution or warranty; and is therefore, at best, an act of will worship not to be complied withal.

It is said, that kneeling is required not as an act of worship or religious adoration, but only as a posture decent and comely, because the sacrament is delivered with a prayer unto every one. But,

1. That delivery of it with a prayer unto every one, is uninstituted, without primitive example, contrary to the practice at the first institution of the ordinance, unsuited unto the nature of the communion required, and a disturbance of it.

2. He that prays stands, and he that doth not pray, kneels: which must be on another consideration. For,

3. Praying is not the proper exercise of faith, in the instant of receiving of this sacrament, as is evident from the nature and use of it.

4. The known original of this rite doth render it not only justly to be suspected, but to be avoided.

On these considerations, which might be enlarged, and many others that might be added, it is evident that the practice inquired into, with respect unto the persons at first intended, is unlawful; and includes in it a renunciation of all the principles of that church communion, wherein they are engaged. And whereas some few have judged it not to be so, they ought to rectify their mistake in their future walking!

TWELVE ARGUMENTS

AGAINST ANY

CONFORMITY OF MEMBERS OF SEPARATE CHURCHES TO THE NATIONAL CHURCH.

POSITION.

It is not lawful for us to go to, and join in public worship, by the common-prayer, because that worship itself, according to the rule of the gospel, is not lawful.

Some things must be premised to the confirmation of this position.

As first, The whole system of liturgical worship, with all its inseparable dependances, are intended. For as such, it is established by law, and not in any part of it only: as such, it is required that we receive it, and attend unto it. It is not in our power, it is not left to our judgment or liberty, to close with or make use of any part of it, as we shall think fit.

There are in the mass book many prayers and praises directed to God only, by Jesus Christ, yet it is not lawful for us thereon to go to mass under a pretence of joining only in such lawful prayers; as we must not affect[a] their drink-offerings of blood, so we must not take up their names into our lips. Have no communion with them.

2. It is to be considered as armed with laws: first, such as declare and enjoin it, as the only true worship of the church; secondly, such as prohibit, condemn, and punish all other ways of the worship of God in church assemblies: by our communion and conjunction in it, we justify those laws.

3. This conjunction by communion in the worship of the liturgy, is a symbol, pledge, and token of an ecclesiastical incorporation with the church of England in its present constitution. It is so in the law of the land,[b] it is so in the common understanding of all men; and by these rules must our profession and practice be judged, and not by any reserves of our own, which neither God nor good men will allow-of.

[a] Psal. xvi. 4. [b] In the canon of the church.

4. Wherefore, he that joineth in the worship of the common prayer, doth by his practice make profession that it is the true worship of God, accepted by him, and approved of him, and wholly agreeable to his mind, and to do it with other reserves is hypocrisy, and worse than the thing itself without them; 'Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.'[c]

5. There may be a false worship of the true God as well as a worship of a false god; such was the worship of Jehovah the Lord, by the calf in the wilderness:[d] such was the feast unto the Lord, ordained by Jeroboam in[e] the eighth month, fifteenth day of the month, the which he devised of his own heart.

On these suppositions, the proposition laid down is proved by these following arguments.

FIRST ARGUMENT.

Religious worship, not divinely instituted and appointed, is false worship, not accepted with God; but the liturgical worship intended is a religious worship not divinely instituted nor appointed; ergo, not accepted of God.

The proposition is confirmed by all the divine testimonies, wherein all such worship is expressly condemned;[f] that especially, where the Lord Christ restraineth all worship to his alone command.

It is answered to the minor proposition, that the liturgical worship is of Christ's appointment, as to the substantials of it, though not as to its accidentals, namely, prayers and praises, not unto its outward rites and forms, which do not vitiate the whole. But it is replied,

1. There is nothing accidental in the worship of God: every thing that belongs to it is part of it,[g] some things are of more use, weight, and importance, than others; but all things that duly belong unto it, are part of it, or of its substance: outward circumstances are natural and occasional, not accidental parts of worship.

2. Prayers and praises, absolutely considered, are not an institution of Christ; they are a part of natural worship, common to all mankind. His institution respecteth only

[c] Rom. xiv. 22. [d] Exod. xxxii. 56. [e] 1 Kings xii. 32, 33.
[f] Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. Prov. xxx. 6. Jer. vii. 31. Isa. xxxix. 13. Matt. xxviii. 20.
[g] Matt. xxiii. 23.

the internal form of them, and the manner of their performance: but this is that which the liturgy taketh on itself, namely, to supply and determine the matter, to prescribe the manner, and to limit all the concerns of them to modes and forms of its own, which is to take the work of Christ out of his hands!

3. Outward rites and modes of worship divinely instituted and determined, do become thereby necessary parts of divine worship,[h] therefore such as are humanly instituted, appointed, and determined, are thereby made parts of worship, namely, of that which is false for want of a divine institution.

4. Prayer and praise are not things prescribed and enjoined in and by the liturgy; it is so far from it, that thereby all prayers and praises in church assemblies, merely as such, are prohibited; but it is its own forms, ways, and modes, with their determination and limitation alone, that are instituted, prescribed, and enjoined by it; but these things have no divine institution, and therefore are so far false worship.

SECOND ARGUMENT.

That which was in its first contrivance, and hath been in its continuance, an invention, or engine to defeat or render useless the promise of Christ unto his church, of sending the Holy Spirit in all ages to enable it unto a due discharge and performance of all divine worship in its assemblies; is unlawful to be complied withal, nor can be admitted in religious worship; but such is the liturgical worship. Ergo, &c.

That the Lord Jesus Christ did make such a promise, that he doth make it good, that the very being and continuance of the church (without which it is but a dead machine) doth depend thereon, I suppose will not be denied, it hath been sufficiently proved. Hereon the church lived and acted for sundry ages, performing all divine worship in their assemblies, by virtue of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and no otherwise.

When these things were neglected, when the way of attaining them, and the exercise of them, appeared too difficult to men of carnal minds, this way of worship, by a prescribed liturgy, was insensibly brought in, to render the promise of

[h] Lev. i. 16.

Christ, and the whole work of the Holy Spirit in the administration of gifts, useless; and thereupon two things did follow:

1. A total neglect of all gifts of the Holy Spirit in the administration of church worship and ordinances.

2. When a plea for the work of the Holy Spirit began to be revived, it produced all that enmity, hatred, and contempt of and against the Spirit of God himself, and his whole work in the church, which the world is now filled withal. All the reproaches that are daily cast upon the spirit of prayer; all that contempt and scorn, which all duty of religious worship performed by his aid and assistance are entertained withal, arise from hence alone, namely, from a justification of this devised way of worship, as the only true way and means thereof.

Take away this, and the wrath and anger of men against the Spirit of God and his work, in the worship of the church, will be abated; yea the necessity of them will be evident. This we cannot comply with, lest we approve of the original design of it, and partake in the sins which proceed from it.

THIRD ARGUMENT.

That in religious worship, which derogates from the kingly office of Jesus Christ, so far as it doth so, is false worship.

Unto this office of Christ, it inseparably belongs, that he be the sole lawgiver of the church, in all the worship of God. The rule of his government herein is, 'Teach men to observe and do whatsoever I command.'

But the worship treated about, consisteth wholly in the institutions, commands, prescriptions, orders, and rules of men; and on the authority of men alone do all their impositions on the practice of the church depend; what is this, but to renounce the kingly office of Christ in the church?

FOURTH ARGUMENT.

That which giveth testimony against the faithfulness of Christ in his house, as a Son and Lord of it, above that of any servant, is not to be complied withal, let all his disciples judge.

Unto this faithfulness of Christ it doth belong, to appoint and command all things whatever in the church that belong

to the worship of God; as is evident from his comparison with Moses herein, and his preference above him; but the institution and prescription of all things in religious worship, of things never instituted nor prescribed by Christ in the forms and modes of them, ariseth from a supposition of a defect in the wisdom, care, and faithfulness of Christ, whence alone a necessity can arise, of prescribing that in religious worship, which he hath not prescribed.

FIFTH ARGUMENT.

That which is a means humanly invented, for the attaining of an end in divine worship, which Christ hath ordained a means for, unto the exclusion of the means so appointed by Christ, is false worship, and not to be complied withal.

The end intended, is the edification of the church, in the administration of all its holy ordinances. This, the service-book is ordained and appointed by men for, or it hath no end or use at all; but the Lord Christ hath appointed other means for the attaining the end, as is expressly declared, 'He hath given gifts to men for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body;'[i] that is, in all gospel administrations: but the means ordained by Christ, namely, the exercise of spiritual gifts in gospel administrations, unto the edification of the church, is excluded, yea, expressly prohibited in the prescription of this liturgical worship. The pretence of men's liberty to use their gifts in prayer before their sermons, and in preaching, is ridiculed; they are excluded in all the solemn worship of the church.

SIXTH ARGUMENT.

That which hath been and is obstructive of the edification of the church, if it be in religious worship, it is false worship; for the end of all true worship is edification; but such hath been and is this liturgical worship. For,

1. It putteth an utter stop to the progress of the reformation in this nation, fixing bounds to it, that it could never pass.

2. It hath kept multitudes in ignorance.

3. It hath countenanced and encouraged many in reviling and reproaching the Holy Spirit and his work.

[i] Eph. iv. 7, 8. 11.

4. It hath set up and warranted an ungifted ministry.
5. It hath made great desolations in the church.
(1.) In the silencing of faithful and painful ministers.
(2.) In the ruin of families innumerable.
(3.) In the destruction of souls!

It is not lawful to be participant in these things, yea, the glory of our profession lies in our testimony against them

SEVENTH ARGUMENT.

That practice, whereby we condemn the suffering saints of the present age, rendering them false witnesses of God, and the only blamable cause of their own sufferings, is not to be approved; but such is this practice: and where this is done on a pretence of liberty, without any plea of necessary duty on our part, it is utterly unlawful.

EIGHTH ARGUMENT.

That practice, which is accompanied with unavoidable scandal, engaged in only on pretence of liberty, is contrary to the gospel; but such is our joining in the present public worship. It were endless to reckon up all the scandals which will ensue hereon.

That which respecteth our enemies, must not be omitted; will they not think, will they not say, that we have only falsely and hypocritically pretended conscience for what we do, where we can on outward considerations comply with that which is required of us? Woe to the world, because of such offences, but woe to them also, by whom they are given.

NINTH ARGUMENT.

That worship which is unsuited to the spiritual relish of the new creature, which is inconsistent with the conduct of the Spirit of God in prayer, is unlawful: for the nature, use, and benefit of prayer is overthrown hereby, in a great measure.

Now let any one consider what are the promised aids of the Holy Spirit, with respect unto the prayers of the church, whether as to the matter of them, or as to the ability for their performance, or as to the manner of it, and he shall find that they are all rejected and excluded by this form of worship; comprising (as is pretended) the whole matter, limiting the whole manner, and giving all the abilities for prayer, that are needful or required; and this hath been proved at large.

TENTH ARGUMENT.

That which overthrows and dissolves our church covenant, as unto the principal ends of it, is, as unto us, unlawful.

This end is the professed joint subjection of our souls and consciences unto the authority of Christ in the observation of all whatever he commands, and nothing else in the worship of God; but by this practice, this end of the church covenant is destroyed, and thereby the church covenant itself is broken; for we do and observe that which Christ hath not commanded, and while some stand unto the terms of the covenant which others relinquish, it will fill the church with confusion and disorder.

ELEVENTH ARGUMENT.

That which contains a virtual renunciation of our church-state, and of the lawfulness of our ministry and ordinances therein, is not to be admitted or allowed.

But this also is done by the practice inquired into, for it is a professed conjunction with them in church communion and worship, by whom our church-state and ordinances are condemned as null. And this judgment they make of what we do, affirming, that we are gross dissemblers, if after such a conjunction with them, we return any more into our own assemblies. In this condemnation we do outwardly and visibly join!

TWELFTH ARGUMENT.

That which depriveth us of the principal plea for the justification of our separation from the church of England, in its present state, ought not justly to be received or admitted; but this is certainly done by a supposition of the lawfulness of this worship, and a practice suitable thereunto, as is known to all who are exercised in this case. Many other heads of arguments might be added to the same purpose, if there were occasion.

OF

MARRYING AFTER DIVORCE,

IN CASE OF

ADULTERY.

OF

MARRYING AFTER DIVORCE,

IN CASE OF

ADULTERY.

It is confessed by all, that adultery is a just and sufficient cause of a divorce betwixt married persons.

This divorce, say some, consists in a dissolution 'vinculi matrimonialis,' and so removes the marriage relation, as that the innocent person divorcing, or procuring the divorce, is at liberty to marry again.

Others say, that it is only a separation 'a mensa et thoro,' and that on this occasion, it doth not, nor ought to, dissolve the marriage relation.

I am of the judgment of the former. For,

First, This divorce 'a mensa et thoro' only is no true divorce, but a mere fiction of a divorce, of no use in this case, nor lawful to be made use of, neither by the law of nature, nor the law of God. For,

1. It is, as stated, but a late invention of no use in the world, nor known in more ancient times. For those of the Roman church, who assert it, do grant that divorces by the law of nature were 'a vinculo;' and that so they were also under the Old Testament: and this fiction they would impose on the grace and state of the gospel; which yet makes indeed no alteration in moral relations or duties, but only directs their performance.

2. It is deduced from a fiction; namely, that marriage among Christians is a sacrament of that signification, as renders it indissolvable, and therefore they would have it to take place only amongst believers, the rest of mankind being left to their natural right and privilege. But this is a fiction, and as such in sundry cases they make use of it.

Secondly, A divorce perpetual 'a mensa et thoro' only, is no way useful to mankind, but hurtful and noxious. For,

1. It would constitute a new condition, or state of life,

wherein it is not possible that a man should either have a wife, or not have a wife, lawfully. In one of which estates yet really every man, capable of the state of wedlock, is and must be, whether he will or no. For a man may, as things may be circumstantiated, be absolutely bound in conscience not to receive her again, who was justly repudiated for adultery. Nor can he take another on this divorce. But into this estate God calls no man.

2. It may, and probably will, cast a man under a necessity of sinning. For suppose he hath not the gift of continency, it is the express will of God that he should marry for his relief. Yet on this supposition he sins, if he does so; and in that he sins, if he doth not so.

Thirdly, It is unlawful. For if the bond of marriage abideth, the relation still continues. This relation is the foundation of all mutual duties. And whilst all that continues, none can dispense with, or prohibit from, the performance of those duties. If a woman do continue in the relation of a wife to a man, she may claim the duties of marriage from him. Separation there may be by consent for a season, or upon other occasions, that may hinder the actual discharge of conjugal duties; but to make an obligation unto such duties void, whilst the relation doth continue, is against the law of nature, and the law of God. This divorce, therefore, supposing the relation of man and wife between any, and no mutual duty thence to arise, is unlawful.

Fourthly, The light of nature never directed to this kind of divorce. Marriage is an ordinance of the law of nature; but in the light and reason thereof, there is no intimation of any such practice. It still directed, that they who might justly put away their wives, might marry others. Hence some, as the ancient Grecians, and the Romans afterward, allowed the husband to kill the adulteress. This among the Romans was changed 'Lege Julia,' but the offence still made capital. In the room hereof afterward divorce took place, purposely to give the innocent person liberty of marriage. So that this kind of divorce is but a fiction.

The first opinion, therefore, is according to truth. For,

First, That which dissolves the form of marriage, and destroys all the forms [ends] of marriage, doth dissolve the bond of marriage. For take away the form and end of any moral

relation, and the relation itself ceaseth. But this is done by adultery, and a divorce ensuing thereon. For the form of marriage consisteth in this, that 'two become one flesh;' Gen. ii. 24. Matt. xix. 6. but this is dissolved by adultery: 'for the adulteress becometh one flesh with the adulterer,' 1 Cor. vi. 16. and so no longer one flesh in individual society with her husband. And it absolutely breaks the bond or covenant of marriage. And how can men contend that is a bond which is absolutely broken? or fancy a 'vinculum' that doth not bind? and, that it absolutely destroys all the forms of marriage, will be granted. It therefore dissolves the bond of marriage itself.

Secondly, If the innocent party upon a divorce be not set at liberty, then,

1. He is deprived of his right by the sins of another, which is against the law of nature; and so every wicked woman hath it in her power to deprive her husband of his natural right.

2. The divorce in case of adultery, pointed by our Saviour to the innocent person to make use of, is, as all confess, for his liberty, advantage, and relief. But on supposition that he may not marry, it would prove a snare and a yoke unto him. For if hereon he hath not the gift of continency, he is exposed to sin and judgment.

Thirdly, Our blessed Saviour gives express direction in the case, Matt. xix. 9. 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.' Hence it is evident, and is the plain sense of the words, that he who putteth away his wife for fornication, and marrieth another, doth not commit adultery. Therefore the bond of marriage in that case is dissolved, and the person that put away his wife, is at liberty to marry. While he denies putting away and marrying again for every cause, the exception of fornication allows both putting away, and marrying again in that case. For an exception always affirms the contrary unto what is denied in the rule, whereunto it is an exception; or, denies what is affirmed in it, in the case comprised in the exception. For every exception is a particular proposition contradictory to the general rule; so that when the one is affirmative, the other is negative, and on the contrary. The rule here in general is affirmative:

He that putteth away his wife, and marries another, committeth adultery. The exception is negative: But he that putteth away his wife for fornication, and marrieth another, doth not commit adultery. Or, they may be otherwise conceived, so that the general rule shall be negative, and the exception affirmative: It is not lawful to put away a wife, and marry another, it is adultery. Then the exception is: It is lawful for a man to put away his wife for fornication, and marry another. And this is the nature of all such exceptions, as I could manifest in instances of all sorts.

It is to no purpose to except, that the other evangelists, Mark x. Luke xvi. do not express the exception insisted on. For,

1. It is since used by Matthew, v. 32. and xix. 9. and therefore was assuredly used by our Saviour.

2. It is a rule owned by all, that where the same thing is reported by several evangelists, the briefer, short, more imperfect expressions, are to be measured and interpreted by the fuller and larger. And every general rule in any place is to be limited by an exception annexed unto it in any one place whatever. And there is scarce any general rule, but admitteth of an exception.

It is more vain to answer, that our Saviour speaketh with respect unto the Jews only, and what was or was not allowed among them. For,

1. In this answer he reduces things to the law of creation, and their primitive institution. He declares what was the law of marriage, and the nature of that relation antecedent to the law and institution of Moses; and so reducing things to the law of nature, gives a rule directive to all mankind in this matter.

2. The Pharisees inquired of our Saviour about such a divorce as was absolute, and gave liberty of marriage after it; for they never heard of any other. The pretended separation 'a mensa et thoro' only, was never heard of in the Old Testament. Now if our Saviour doth not answer concerning the same divorce about which they inquired, but another which they knew nothing of; he doth not answer them, but delude them. They ask after one thing, and he answers another in nothing to their purpose. But this is not to be admitted: it were blasphemy to imagine it.

Wherefore denying the causes of divorce which they allowed, and asserting fornication to be a just cause thereof, he allows in that case of that divorce which they inquired about, which was absolute, and from the bond of marriage.

Again, the apostle Paul expressly sets the party at liberty to marry, who is maliciously and obstinately deserted, affirming that the Christian religion doth not prejudice the natural right and privilege of men in such cases, 1 Cor. vii. 15. 'If the unbelieving depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.' If a person obstinately depart, on pretence of religion or otherwise, and will no more cohabit with a husband or wife, it is known that by the law of nature, and the usage of all nations, the deserted party, because without his or her default all the ends of marriage are frustrated, is at liberty to marry. But it may be, it is not so among Christians. What shall a brother, or a sister, that is a Christian, do in this case, who is so departed from? saith the apostle: they are not in bondage, they are free, at liberty to marry again.

This is the constant doctrine of all Protestant churches in the world. And it hath had place in the government of these nations: for queen Elizabeth was born during the life of queen Katharine, from whom her father was divorced.

OF

INFANT BAPTISM,

AND

DIPPING.

OF

INFANT BAPTISM, AND DIPPING.

OF INFANT BAPTISM.

I. The question is not, whether professing believers, Jews or Gentiles, not baptized in their infancy, ought to be baptized? For this is by all confessed.

II. Neither is it, whether in such persons the profession of saving faith, and repentance, ought not to go before baptism? This we plead for, beyond what is the common practice of those who oppose us.

Wherefore testimonies produced out of authors, ancient or modern, to confirm these things, which consist with the doctrine of infant baptism, are mere tergiversations, that belong not to this cause at all; and so are all arguments produced unto that end out of the Scriptures.

III. The question is not, whether all infants are to be baptized, or not? For according to the will of God some are not to be baptized; even such, whose parents are strangers from the covenant. But hence it will follow, that some are to be baptized: seeing an exception confirms both rule and right.

IV. The question is only concerning the children, or infant seed, of professing believers, who are themselves baptized. And,

First, They by whom this is denied, can produce no testimony of Scripture, wherein their negation is formally or in terms included, nor any one asserting what is inconsistent with the affirmative: for it is weak beneath consideration to suppose, that the requiring of the baptism of believers is inconsistent with that of their seed. But this is to be required of them, who oppose infant baptism, that they produce such a testimony.

Secondly, No instance can be given from the Old or New Testament, since the days of Abraham; none from the ap-

proved practice of the primitive church, of any person or persons born of professing, believing parents, who were themselves made partakers of the initial seal of the covenant, being then in infancy, and designed to be brought up in the knowledge of God, who were not made partakers with them of the same sign and seal of the covenant.

Thirdly, A spiritual privilege once granted by God unto any, cannot be changed, disannulled, or abrogated, without an especial, divine revocation of it, or the substitution of a greater privilege and mercy in the room of it. For,

1. Who shall disannul what God hath granted? What he hath put together, who shall put asunder? To abolish, or take away any grant of privilege made by him to the church, without his own express revocation of it, is to deny his sovereign authority.

2. To say, a privilege so granted may be revoked, even by God himself, without the substitution of a greater privilege and mercy in the room of it, is contrary to the goodness of God, his love and care unto his church; contrary to his constant course of proceeding with it from the foundation of the world, wherein he went on in the enlargement and increase of its privileges, until the coming of Christ. And to suppose it under the gospel, is contrary to all his promises, the honour of Christ, and a multitude of express testimonies of Scripture.

Thus was it with the privileges of the temple, and the worship of it granted to the Jews; they were not, they could not, be taken away without an express revocation, and the substitution of a more glorious, spiritual temple and worship in their room.

But now the spiritual privileges of a right unto, and a participation of the initial seal of the covenant, was granted by God unto the infant seed of Abraham; Gen. xvii. 10.

This grant therefore must stand firm for ever, unless men can prove or produce,

(1.) An express revocation of it by God himself, which none can do either directly, or indirectly, in terms, or any pretence of consequence.

(2.) An instance of a greater privilege or mercy granted unto them in the room of it; which they do not once pretend unto, but leave the seed of believers, whilst in their infant

state, in the same condition with those of pagans and infidels, expressly contrary to God's covenant.

All this contest therefore is to deprive the children of believers of a privilege once granted to them by God, never revoked as to the substance of it, assigning nothing in its room, which is contrary to the goodness, love, and covenant of God, especially derogatory to the honour of Jesus Christ and the gospel.

Fourthly, They that have the thing signified, have right unto the sign of it: or those who are partakers of the grace of baptism, have a right to the administration of it; so Acts x. 47.

But the children of believers are all of them capable of the grace signified in baptism, and some of them are certainly partakers of it, namely, such as die in their infancy (which is all that can be said of professors); therefore they may and ought to be baptized. For,

1. Infants are made for, and are capable of eternal glory or misery, and must fall, dying infants, in one of these estates for ever.

2. All infants are born in a state of sin, wherein they are spiritually dead, and under the curse.

3. Unless they are regenerate and born again, they must all perish inevitably; John iii. 4. Their regeneration is the grace whereof baptism is a sign or token. Wherever this is, there baptism ought to be administered.

Fifthly, God having appointed baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration, unto whom he denies it, he denies the grace signified by it. Why is it the will of God, that unbelievers and impenitent sinners should not be baptized? It is, because not granting them the grace, he will not grant them the sign. If therefore God denies the sign unto the infant seed of believers, it must be because he denies them the grace of it; and then all the children of believing parents dying in their infancy must without hope be eternally damned. I do not say, that all must be so, who are not baptized; but all must be so whom God would have not baptized.

But this is contrary to the goodness and law of God, the nature and promises of the covenant, the testimony of Christ

reckoning them to the kingdom of God, the faith of godly parents, and the belief of the church in all ages.

It follows hence unavoidably, that infants who die in their infancy, have the grace of regeneration, and consequently as a good a right unto baptism as believers themselves.

Sixthly, All children in their infancy are reckoned unto the covenant of their parents by virtue of the law of their creation.

For they are all made capable of eternal rewards and punishments, as hath been declared.

But in their own persons, they are not capable of doing good or evil.

It is therefore contrary to the justice of God, and the law of the creation of human kind, wherein many die before they can discern between their right hand and their left, to deal with infants any otherwise but in and according to the covenant of their parents, and that he doth so, see Rom. v. 14.

Hence I argue,

Those who by God's appointment, and by virtue of the law of their creation, are and must of necessity be included in the covenant of their parents, have the same right with them unto the privileges of that covenant, no express exception being put in against them. This right it is in the power of none to deprive them of, unless they can change the law of their creation.

Thus it is with the children of believers with respect unto the covenant of their parents; whence alone they are said to be holy; 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Seventhly, Christ is 'the messenger of the covenant,' Mal. iii. 1. that is, of the covenant of God made with Abraham. And he 'was the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers;' Rom. xv. 8. This covenant was, that he would be 'a God unto Abraham and his seed.'

Now if this be not so under the New Testament, then was not Christ a faithful messenger, nor did confirm the truth of God in his promises.

This argument alone will bear the weight of the whole cause against all objection. For,

1. Children are still in the same covenant with their parents, or the truth of the promises of God to the fathers was not confirmed by Christ.

2. The right unto the covenant, and interest in its promises wherever it be, gives right unto the administration of its initial seal, i. e. to baptism, as Peter expressly declares, Acts ii. 38, 39. Wherefore,

The right of the infant seed of believers unto baptism, as the initial seal of the covenant, stands on the foundation of the faithfulness of Christ, as the messenger of the covenant, and minister of God, for the confirmation of the truth of his promises.

In brief, a participation of the seal of the covenant is a spiritual blessing. This the seed of believers was once solemnly invested in by God himself; this privilege he hath nowhere revoked, though he hath changed the outward sign, nor hath he granted unto our children any privilege or mercy in lieu of it now under the gospel, when all grace and privileges are enlarged to the utmost; his covenant promises concerning them which are multiplied, were confirmed by Christ as a true messenger and minister; he gives the grace of baptism unto many of them, especially those that die in their infancy; owns children to belong unto his kingdom; esteems them disciples, appoints households to be baptized without exception. And who shall now rise up, and withhold water from them?

This argument may be thus farther cleared and improved.

Christ is 'the messenger of the covenant;' Mal. iii. 1. that is, the covenant of God with Abraham; Gen. xvii. 7. For,

1. That covenant was with and unto Christ mystical; Gal. iii. 16. And he was the messenger of no covenant, but that which was made with himself and his members.

2. He was sent, or was God's messenger, to perform and accomplish the covenant and oath made with Abraham, Luke, i. 72, 73.

3. The end of his message, and of his coming was, that those to whom he was sent, might be blessed with faithful Abraham; or, that the blessing of Abraham promised in the covenant, might come upon them; Gal. iii. 9, 14.

To deny this, overthrows the whole relation between the

Old Testament and the New; the veracity of God in his promises, and all the properties of the covenant of grace, mentioned 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

It was not the covenant of works, neither originally, or essentially; nor the covenant in its legal administration; for he confirmed and sealed that covenant, whereof he was the messenger; but these he abolished.

Let it be named what covenant he was the messenger of, if not of this. Occasional additions of temporal promises do not in the least alter the nature of the covenant.

Herein he 'was the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers;' Rom. xv. 8. That is undeniably the covenant made with Abraham, enlarged and explained by following promises. This covenant was, that God would be 'a God unto Abraham and his seed;' which God himself explains to be his infant seed, Gen. xvii. 12. that is, the infant seed of every one of his posterity, who should lay hold on and avouch that covenant, as Abraham did, and not else. This the whole church did solemnly for themselves and their posterity, whereon the covenant was confirmed and sealed to them all; Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. And every one was bound to do the same in his own person; which if he did not, he was to be cut off from the congregation, whereby he forfeited all privileges unto himself and his seed.

The covenant therefore was not granted in its administrations unto the carnal seed of Abraham as such; but unto his covenanted seed, those who entered into it, and professedly stood to its terms.

And the promises made unto the fathers were, that their infant seed, their buds, and offspring, should have an equal share in the covenant with them; Isa. xxii. 24. xliv. 3. lxi. 9. lxv. 23. 'They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.' Not only themselves who are the believing, professing seed of those who were blessed of the Lord by a participation of the covenant, Gal. iii. 9. but their offspring also, their buds, their tender little ones, are in the same covenant with them.

To deny therefore that the children of believing, professing parents, who have avouched God's covenant, as the

church of Israel did, Exod. xxiv. 7. 8. have the same right and interest with their parents in the covenant, is plainly to deny the fidelity of Christ in the discharge of his office.

It may be it will be said, That although children have a right to the covenant, or do belong unto it, yet they have no right to the initial seal of it.

This will not suffice; for,

(1.) If they have any interest in it, it is either in its grace, or in its administration. If they have the former, they have the latter also, as shall be proved at any time. If they have neither, they have no interest in it; then the truth of the promises of God made unto the fathers was not confirmed by Christ.

(2.) That unto whom the covenant or promise doth belong, to them belongs the administration of the initial seal of it, is expressly declared by the apostle, Acts ii. 38, 39. be they who they will.

(3.) The truth of God's promises is not confirmed, if the sign and seal of them be denied: for that whereon they believed, that God was a God unto their seed, as well as unto themselves, was this; that he granted the token of the covenant unto their seed, as well as unto themselves. If this be taken away by Christ, their faith is overthrown; and the promise itself is not confirmed, but weakened, as to the virtue it hath to beget faith and obedience.

Eighthly, Particular testimonies may be pleaded and vindicated, if need be, and the practice of the primitive church.[a]

A Vindication of two Passages in Irenæus against the Exceptions of Mr. Tombs.

The passages are these:

'Adversus Hæreses,' lib. 2. cap. 39. 'Magister ergo existens, magistri quoque habebat ætatem, non reprobans nec supergrediens hominem, neque solvens suam legem in se humani generis, sed omnem ætatem sanctificans per illam quæ ad ipsum erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur

[a] See also Dr. Owen on the Hebrews, vol. i. Exercitation the sixth, and vol. ii. p. 256. in which place he gives farther light into this truth of infant baptism.

in Deum, infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem; et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes ætatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus, et justitiæ et subjectionis; in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum juvenibus fiens, et sanctificans Domino; sic et senior in senioribus, ut sit perfectus magister in omnibus, non solum secundum expositionem veritatis, sed et secundum ætatem sanctificans simul et seniores, exemplum ipsis quoque fiens; deinde et usque ad mortem pervenit, ut sit primogenitus ex mortuis, ipse primatum tenens in omnibus, princeps vitæ, prior omnium, et præcedens omnes.'

Lib. i. c. 18. *Ὅσοι γάρ εἰσι ταύτης τῆς γνώμης μυσταγωγοὶ, τοσαῦται καὶ ἀπολυτρώσεις. Ὅτι μὲν εἰς ἐξάρνησιν τοῦ βαπτίσματος τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀναγεννήσεως, καὶ πάσης τῆς πίστεως ἀποθεσιν ὑποβέβληται τὸ εἶδος τοῦ ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ, ἐλέγχοντες αὐτοὺς ἀπαγγελοῦμεν ἐν τῷ προσήκοντι τόπῳ.*

Mr. Tombs tells us, this proves not infant baptism, because though it be granted that in Justin Martyr, and others of the ancients, to be regenerated is to be baptized, yet it doth not appear that Irenæus meant it so in this place, unless it were proved it is so only meant by him and the ancients. Nor doth Irenæus, lib. i. cap. 18., term baptism regeneration; but saith thus, 'To the denying of baptism of that regeneration which is unto God.' But that indeed the word, 'renascuntur,' 'are born again,' is not meant of baptism, is proved from the words, and the scope of them. For,

1. The words are, 'per eum renascuntur,' 'by him,' that is, Christ, 'are born again.' And it is clear from the scope of the speech about the fulness of his age, as a perfect master, that 'by him' notes his person according to his human nature. Now, if then, 'by him are born again,' be as much as, 'by him are baptized,' this should be Irenæus's assertion, That by Christ himself in his human body, infants, and little ones, and boys, and young men, and elder men, are baptized unto God. But this speech is most manifestly false; for neither did Christ baptize any at all in his own person; John iv. 1, 2. 'Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples;' nor did the disciples baptize any infant at all, as may be gathered from the whole New Testament.

2. The word which Irenæus expresseth, whereby persons

are born again to God by Christ, is applied to the example of his age, as the words and scope shew. But he was not in his age an example of every age by his baptism, as if he did by it sanctify every age; for then he should have been baptized in every age, but in respect of the holiness of his human nature, which did remain in each age, and so exemplarily sanctify each age to God, so as that there was no age but was capable of holiness by conformity to his example.

3. Irenæus's words are 'Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes, et parvulos,' &c. Now if the meaning were, that Christ came to save all that were baptized by him, or by his appointment, then he came to save Simon Magus, or whoever are or have been baptized rightly. But in that sense the proposition is most palpably false, and therefore that sense is not to be attributed to his words.

4. Christ is by Irenæus said to sanctify as 'a perfect master, not only according to the exposition of truth, but also as an example to them of piety, justice, and subjection.' But this is to be understood not in respect of his baptism only, but his whole life, in which he was an example, even an infant, for then he did willingly empty himself, 'took upon him the form of a servant,' &c. Phil. ii. 7, 8.

By all which reasons (saith Mr. Tombs), I presume the readers who are willing to see truth, will perceive this passage of Irenæus to be wrested by Pædobaptists against its meaning, to prove a use of pædobaptism in his time.

Ans. 1. The phrase of 'renascuntur in Deum,' is so constantly used by the ancients for baptism, that it may be referred to the conscience of Mr. Tombs, or any one who hath been conversant in their writings, whether they would not have judged and granted that it was here intended, if mention had not been made of infants and little ones. The ensuing exceptions therefore are an endeavour to stifle light in favour of an opinion, which is not unusual with some.

2. 'Per eum,' is the same with 'per semetipsum,' in the words immediately foregoing; that is, by himself in his mediation, grace, and ordinances. And to suppose that if baptism be intended, he must baptize them in his own person, is a mere cavil; for all that are born to God by baptism to this day, are so by him.

3. The words εἰς ἐξάρνησιν τοῦ βαπτίσματος τῆς εἰς Θεὸν ἀναγεννήσεως, 'unto the denial of the baptism of regeneration unto God,' do plainly declare, that by 'renascuntur' he intends the baptism of regeneration, as being the means and pledge of it, in allusion to that of the Apostle, λούτρον παλιγγενεσίας, Tit. iii. 5.

4. It is remarkable in the words of Irenæus, that in expressing the way and means of the renascency of infants, he mentions nothing of the example of Christ, which he adds unto that of all other ages.

5. The example of Christ is mentioned as one outward means of the regeneration of them who were capable of its use and improvement; of his being an example of baptism, nothing is spoken: nor was Christ in his own person an example of regeneration unto any; for as he was not baptized in all ages, so he was never regenerate in any, for he needed no regeneration.

6. It is well that it is so positively granted that Christ doth sanctify infants; which, seeing he doth not do so to all universally, must be those of believing parents; which is enough to end this controversy.

7. The meaning of Irenæus is no more, but that Christ, passing through all ages, evidenced his design to exclude no age, to communicate his grace unto all sorts and ages; and he mentioneth old men, because his judgment was, that Christ was fifty years old when he died.

8. It was the constant opinion of the ancients, that Christ came to save all that were baptized; not intending his purpose and intention with respect unto individuals, but his approbation of the state of baptism, and his grant of the means of grace.

OF DIPPING.

Βάπτω, used in these Scriptures, Luke xvi. 24. John xiii. 26. Rev. xix. 13. we translate 'to dip.' It is only 'to touch one part of the body.' That of Rev. xix. 13. is better rendered, 'stained by sprinkling.'

In other authors it is 'tingo, immergo, lavo,' or 'abluo;' but in no author ever signifies 'to dip,' but only in order to

washing, or as the means of washing. It is no where used with respect unto the ordinance of baptism.

The Hebrew word טבל is rendered by the Seventy, Gen. xxxvii. 31. by *μολύνω*, 'to stain by sprinkling,' or otherwise; mostly by *βάπτω*. 2 Kings, v. 14. they render it by *βαπτίζω*, and nowhere else. In ver. 10. Elisha commands him 'to wash;' therefore that in ver. 14. is, that 'he washed.' Exod. xii. 22. is, 'to put the top of the hyssop into blood,' to sprinkle it. 1 Sam. xiv. 27. 'to take a little honey with the top of a rod: in neither places can dipping or plunging be intended. Lev. iv. 6. 17. ix. 9. and in other places, it is only 'to touch the blood,' so as to sprinkle it.

Βαπτίζω signifies 'to wash;' as instances out of all authors may be given, Suidas, Hesychius, Julius Pollux, Phavorinus, and Eustachius.

It is first used in the Scripture, Mark i. 8. John i. 33. and to the same purpose, Acts i. 5. In every place it either signifies 'to pour,' or the expression is equivocal. 'I baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;' which is the accomplishment of that promise, that 'the Holy Ghost should be poured on them.'

For the other places, Mark vii. 3, 4. *νίπτω* and *βαπτίζω* is plainly the same, both 'to wash.' Luke xi. 38. the same with Mark vii. 3. No one instance can be given in the Scripture, wherein *βαπτίζω* doth necessarily signify either 'to dip,' or 'plunge.'

Βαπτίζω may be considered either as to its original, natural sense, or as to its mystical use in the ordinance.

This distinction must be observed concerning many other words in the New Testament, as *ἐκκλησία*, *χειροτονία*, and others, which have a peculiar sense in their mystical use.

In this sense, as it expresseth baptism, it denotes 'to wash' only, and not 'to dip' at all: for so it is expounded, Tit. iii. 5. Eph. v. 26. Heb. x. 22. 1 Pet. iii. 21. And it signifies that communication of the Spirit, which is expressed by 'pouring out,' and 'sprinkling,' Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and expresseth our being 'washed in the blood of Christ;' Tit. ii. 14. Heb. ix. 14. 19. 23.

Wherefore in this sense, as the word is applied unto the ordinance, the sense of dipping is utterly excluded. And though as a mere external mode it may be used, provided the

person dipped be naked; yet to urge it as necessary, overthrows the nature of the sacrament.

For the original and natural signification of it, it signifies 'to dip, to plunge, to die, to wash, to cleanse.'

But I say, 1. It doth not signify properly 'to dip,' or 'plunge,' for that in Greek is, ἐμβάπτω and ἐμβαπτίζω. 2. It no where signifies 'to dip,' but as a mode of, and in order to, washing. 3. It signifies the 'dipping' of a finger, or the least touch of the water, and not plunging the whole. 4. It signifies 'to wash' also in all good authors.

I have not all those quoted to the contrary. In the quotations of them whom I have, if it be intended, that they say it signifies 'to dip,' and not 'to wash, or 'to dip' only, there is neither truth nor honesty in them by whom they are quoted.

Scapula is one, a common book; and he gives it the sense of 'lavo, abluo,' 'to wash,' and 'wash away.'

Stephanus is another, and he expressly in sundry places assigns 'lavo' and 'abluo' to be also the sense of it.

Aquinas is for dipping of children, provided it be done three times in honour of the Trinity; but he maintains pouring or sprinkling to be lawful also; affirming that Laurentius, who lived about the time two hundred and fifty, so practised. But he meddles not with the sense of the word, as being too wise to speak of that which he understood not; for he knew no Greek.

In Suidas, the great treasury of the Greek tongue, it is rendered by 'madefacio, lavo, abluo, purgo, mundo.'

The places in the other authors being not quoted, I cannot give an account of what they say. I have searched some of them in every place wherein they mention baptism, and find no one word to the purpose. I must say, and will make it good, that no honest man who understands the Greek tongue, can deny the word to signify, 'to wash,' as well as 'to dip.'

It must not be denied, but that in the primitive times, they did use to baptize both grown persons and children oftentimes by dipping; but they affirmed it necessary to dip them stark naked, and that three times; but not one ever denied pouring water to be lawful.

The apostle, Rom. vi. 3—5. is dehorting from sin, ex-

horting to holiness and new obedience, and gives this argument from the necessity of it, and our ability for it, both taken from our initiation into the virtue of the death and life of Christ expressed in our baptism; that by virtue of the death and burial of Christ, we should be dead unto sin, sin being slain thereby; and by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, we should be quickened unto newness of life; as Peter declares, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Our being buried with him, and our being planted together into the likeness of his death, and likeness of his resurrection, is the same with 'our old man being crucified with him,' ver. 6. and the destroying of the body of sin, and our being raised from the dead with him, which is all that is intended in the place.

There is not one word, nor one expression, that mentions any resemblance between dipping under water, and the death and burial of Christ, nor one word that mentions a resemblance between our rising out of the water, and the resurrection of Christ. Our being 'buried with him by baptism into death,' ver. 4. is our being 'planted together in the likeness of his death,' ver. 5. Our being planted together in the likeness of his death, is not our being dipped under water, but 'the crucifying of the old man,' ver. 6. Our being raised up with Christ from the dead, is not our rising from under the water, but our 'walking in newness of life,' ver. 4. by virtue of the resurrection of Christ; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

That baptism is not a sign of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is clear from hence; because an instituted sign is a sign of gospel grace participated, or to be participated. If dipping be a sign of the burial of Christ, it is not a sign of a gospel grace participated; for it may be where there is none, nor any exhibited.

For the major: if all gospel ordinances are signs and expressions of the communication of the grace of Christ, then baptism is so: but this is the end of all gospel ordinances, or else they have some other end; or are vain and empty shows.

The same individual sign cannot be instituted to signify things of several natures. But the outward burial of Christ, and a participation of the virtue of Christ's death and burial, are things of a diverse nature, and therefore are not signified by one sign.

That interpretation which would enervate the apostle's argument and design, our comfort and duty, is not to be admitted. But this interpretation that baptism is mentioned here as the sign of Christ's burial, would enervate the apostle's argument and design, our comfort and duty. And therefore it is not to be admitted.

The minor is thus proved: the argument and design of the apostle, as was before declared, is to exhort and encourage unto mortification of sin and new obedience, by virtue of power received from the death and life of Christ, whereof a pledge is given us in our baptism. But this is taken away by this interpretation: for we may be so buried with Christ and planted into the death of Christ by dipping, and yet have no power derived from Christ for the crucifying of sin, and for the quickening of us to obedience.

REFLECTIONS

ON A

SLANDEROUS LIBEL

AGAINST

DOCTOR OWEN,

IN

A LETTER TO SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

REFLECTIONS

ON

A SLANDEROUS LIBEL, &c.

SIR,

It is upon your desire, and not in any compliance with my own judgment or inclination, that I have taken a little consideration of a late slanderous libel published against me. I have learned, I bless God, to bear and pass by such reproaches, without much trouble to myself, or giving the least unto others. My mind and conscience are not at all concerned in them, and so far as my reputation seems to be so, I am very willing to let it go: for I cannot entertain a valuation of their good opinion, whose minds are capable of an impression from such virulent calumnies: besides, I know that there is nothing absolutely new in these things under the sun. Others also have met with the like entertainment in the world in all ages, whose names I shall not mention, to avoid the envy in comparing myself with them. I acknowledge that it is a dictate of the law of nature, that where others do us open wrong, we should do ourselves right, so far as we lawfully may. But I know also, that it is in the power of every one to forego the prosecution of his own right, and the vindication of himself, if thereby there arise no detriment unto others. That which alone in this case may be feared, is, lest offence should be taken against my person to the disadvantage of other endeavours, wherein I desire to be useful in the world.

But against this also I have the highest security from that indignation and contempt wherewith this libel is entertained by all persons of ingenuity and sobriety. Not out of any respect therefore to myself, or my own name (things of little or no consideration in or to the world), nor out of a desire that this paper should ever pass farther, than to your own hand, and thence to the fire; but to give you some account of this pamphlet, whose author it seems is known unto you, I have

both perused it, and made some short reflections upon it, which I have herewith sent unto you.

The whole design of this discourse is, 'per fas et nefas,' to endeavour the defamation of a person, who, to his knowledge, never saw the author of it, and is fully assured, never gave him the least provocation unto any such attempt. For when I am told who he is, I am as wise and knowing unto all his concernments as I was before. And yet it is not only my reputation, but considering my present state and condition, with the nature of his libellous aspersions, my farther outward trouble in the world, that he aimeth at; from which he seemeth to be much displeased that I am secured by the righteousness of the government and laws under which I live. Now however he pleased himself in this attempt, yet there is no man but may give as tolerable an account by the law of God, the customs of civilized nations, and in the estimation of wise and honest men, of robbing persons on the highway, and spoiling them of their goods, as he can do of this undertaking. It is true, some others have of late dealt not much otherwise with me, wherein how far they have satisfied themselves and others, time will discover. But yet, according to the present custom and manner of men, they may give some tolerable pretence to what they have done. For they sufficiently declare that they were provoked by me, though no such thing were intended; and it is abundantly manifest, that they had no other way left them to give countenance unto some fond imaginations which they have unadvisedly published, but by petulant reviling of him, by whom they thought they were detected. And such things have not been unfrequent in the world. But as for this author, one wholly unknown to me, without the compass of any pretence of the least provocation from me, to accommodate the lusts and revenges of others, with that unruly evil, a mercenary tongue, full of deadly poison, without the management of any difference, real or pretended, merely to calumniate and load me with false aspersions, as in the issue they will prove, is an instance of such a depraved disposition of mind, such a worthless baseness of soul, such a neglect of all rules of morality and principles of human conversation, such a contempt of Scripture precepts innumerable, as, it may be, can scarcely be paralleled in an age,

amongst the vilest of men. Something I confess of this nature is directed unto in the casuistical divinity, or modern policy of the Jesuits: for they have declared it lawful to reproach and calumniate any one who hath done them an injury, or otherwise reflected on the honour of their society. And notable instances of their management of this principle are given us by the ingenious discoverer of their mysteries. But they always require a previous injury, or provocation to justify themselves in this filthy kind of revenge. And hereby is our author freed from the suspicion of having been influenced by their suggestions. For he hath gone in a way whereon they never attempted to set a foot before him; and scorning a villany that hath a precedent, he seems to design himself an example in the art of sycophantry. However, the same author hath directed men unto the best way of returning an answer unto false and calumnious accusations, whatever be their occasion; for he tells us, that Valerianus Magnus, an honest Capuchin friar, being so dealt withal by a Jesuit, made not any defence of his own innocency, any farther than by adjoining unto all the instances of his charge, 'Mentiris impudentissime.' And this you will immediately find to be the substance of that answer which this book deserves. For setting aside things relating to the former public troubles and disorders in these nations, from the venom of all reflections from whence I am secured by the government, law, and interest of the kingdom, all which in this revival of them are notoriously abused and trampled on, and there is no one thing charged on me in the whole libel, but that, either in the matter or manner of its relation, is notoriously false. The task I acknowledge of making this discovery would be grievous and irksome unto me, but that I must not account any thing so, which may fall out amongst men in the world; and do remember him, who after he had done some public services, whereof others had the advantage, was forced to defend his own house against thieves and robbers.

The whole discourse is a railing accusation, such as the angel durst not bring against the devil; but such as hath many characters and lineaments upon it, of him who was a false accuser and murderer from the beginning. Neither is it capable of a distribution into any other parts but those of

railing, and false accusations. And for the first, seeing he hath manifested his propensity unto it, and delight in it, he shall by me be left to the possession of that honour and reputation which he hath acquired thereby. Besides, his way of managery hath rendered it of no consideration. For, had it been condited to the present gust of the age, by language, wit, or drollery, it might have found some entertainment in the world; but downright dirty railing is beneath the genius of the times, and by common consent condemned to the bear garden and Billingsgate. His charges and accusations, wherein doubtless he placed his principal hopes of success (though I much question whether he knew what he aimed at in particular or no), may in so many instances be called over, as to discover unto you with what little regard to Christianity, truth, or honesty, they have been forged and managed by him.

I shall begin with what he calls my practices, and then proceed to the principles he mentions, which is the best order his confused rhapsody of slanders can be reduced unto, though inverting that which he projected in his title.

1. One of the first charges I meet withal upon the first head, is pag. 9. That I 'was one of them who promised Cromwell his life upon his last sickness, and assured him that his days should be prolonged.' This I confess he manageth somewhat faintly and dubiously, the reason whereof I cannot guess at, it being as true as those other tales, in the report whereof he pretends to more confidence. And I have no answer to return but that of the friar before mentioned, 'Mentitur impudentissime;' for I saw him not in his sickness, nor in some long time before. Of the same nature is what he affirms, p. 28. of my being the instrument in the ruin of his son Richard, with whose setting up, and pulling down, I had no more to do than himself. And such are the reasons which he gives for that which never was. For the things he instanceth in, were my own choice, against all importunities to the contrary; so that the same answer must be returned again, 'Mentitur impudentissime.' P. 10. he charges me, that in writing against the Papists, I reflected upon the authority of the king, as to his power in matters of religion: which he repeats again, p. 34, and calls it 'a covert undermining of the just authority of the king.' Still the same an-

swer is all that can be given. His majesty's supremacy, as declared and established by law, is asserted and proved in the book he intends, p. 404—406. [Vol. xviii. pp. 470, 471.] Nor is there any word in the places quoted by him in his margin, that will give the least countenance to this false calumny. Besides, the book was approved by authority, and that by persons of another manner of judgment and learning, than this pitiful scribbler, who are all here defamed by him. P. 12. he chargeth me with countenancing an accusation against the reverend bishop of Chester, then warden of Wadham college; which is a known lie, and such I believe the bishop, if he be asked, will attest it to be. And so p. 14, he says, I received a commission from Oliver to carry 'gladium ferri:' but 'mentitur impudentissime;' for I never received commission from any man, or company of men in this world, nor to my remembrance did I ever wear a sword in my life. His whole 34th page, had there been any thing of wit, or ingenuity in fiction, in it, I should have suspected to have been borrowed from Lucian's 'Vera Historia,' concerning which he affirmed, that he wrote that which he had never seen, nor heard, nor did any one declare unto him. For it is only a confused heap of malicious lies, which all that read and know, laugh at with scorn. Such likewise is the ridiculous story he tells, p. 66. of my ordering things so, that members of parliament should have a book, which he calls mine, laid in their lodgings by unknown hands; whereof there is not any thing in substance or circumstance that can lay the least pretence to truth, but it is an entire part of his industrious attempt to carry the whetstone. The same must be said concerning what he reports of passages between me and the then lord chancellor; which as I have good witness to prove the mistake that fell out between us, not to have been occasioned by me, so I much question, whether this author was informed of the untruths he reports, by doctor Barlow, or whether ever he gave him his consent to use his name publicly for a countenance unto such a defamatory libel. It were endless and useless to call [cull] out the remaining instances of the same kind, whereof I think there is scarce a page free in his book, unless it be taken up with quotations. And I amsure that whosoever will give the least credit unto any of his stories and assertions, will do it at the utmost peril of being de-

ceived. And where any thing he aims at, hath the least of truth in it, he doth but make it a foundation to build a falsehood upon. Such are his ingenious repetitions of some things I should say, fourteen or fifteen years ago, in private discourses; which, yet supposing them true in the terms by him reported, as they are not, contain nothing of immorality, nothing of injury unto, or reflection on others. Surely this man must be thought to study the adorning and freedom of conversation, who thus openly traduceth a person for words occasionally, and it may be hastily, spoken, without the least injury to any, or evil in themselves, fourteen or fifteen years after. And these also are such as he hath taken upon mere reports, for I believe he will not say, that ever he spake one word with me himself in his life. How any one can safely converse with a man of this spirit and humour, I know not.

I shall wholly pass by his malicious wresting and false applications of the passages he hath quoted out of some things published by me: for as for the greatest part of those small perishing treatises, whence he and others have extracted their pretended advantages, it is many years since I saw them, some of them twenty, at the least; nor do I know how they have dealt in repeating their 'excerpta,' which with so much diligence they have collected; that they are several times wrested and perverted by this malicious scribbler unto things never intended by me, that I do know. One discourse, about communion with God, I find there is much wrath stirred up against; and yet upon the severe scrutiny which it hath on several hands undergone, nothing can be found to lay to its charge, but one passage concerning some differences about external worship; which they needed not to have put themselves to so much trouble to have found out and declared. But as for this man, he makes such inferences from it, and applications of it, as are full of malice and poison, being not inferior in those good qualifications unto any of his other prodigious tales. For from what I speak concerning the purity of instituted worship, he concludes, that I judge, that all who in the worship of God make use of the common-prayer, are not loyal to Christ, nor have communion with God, nor can promote the interest of the gospel; all which are notoriously false, never thought, never spoken, never

written by me. And I do believe, that many that have used that book in the public administrations, have been as loyal to Christ, had as much communion with God, and been as zealous to promote the interest of the gospel, as any who have lived in the world this thousand years. For men are accepted with God according to what they have, and not according to what they have not.

The next charge I can meet withal in this confused heap, which is like the grave, a place of darkness without any order, is no less than of perjury. And this principally he doth on such an account, as is not at all peculiar to me; but the reproach he manageth is equally cast on the greatest part of the kingdom by this public defamer. And I suppose others do, though I do not know the prudence of encouraging such a slanderous libeller, to cast fire-brands among peaceable subjects; and to revive the remembrance of things, which the wisdom, clemency, and righteousness of his majesty, with and by the law of the land, upon the best and most assured principles of piety and policy, hath put into oblivion. And it also seems strange to me, how bold he and some other scribblers make, by their interesting the sacred name of his majesty and his concerns in their impertinent squabblings, as they do on all occasions. But such things are of another cognizance, and there I leave them. What is peculiar to myself in this charge, is represented under a double instance:

1. Of the oath of canonical obedience, which I took and violated. And,

2. Of the university oath.

For the first, although I could easily return an answer unto the thing itself, yet as to what concerns me, I shall give no other but 'mentitur impudentissime;' I never took any such oath.

And for the other I doubt not to speak with some confidence, that the intention and design of the oath was observed by me with as much conscience and diligence, as by any who have since acted in the same capacity, wherein I was at that time reflected on. And upon the provocation of this man, whoever he be, I do not fear to say, that considering the state and condition of affairs at that time in the nation and the university, I do not believe there is any

person of learning, ingenuity, or common modesty, who had relation in those days unto that place, but will grant at least, that notwithstanding some lesser differences from them, about things of very small importance, I was not altogether useless to the interest of learning, morality, peace, and the preservation of the place itself; and farther I am not concerned in the ingratitude and envy of a few illiterate and malicious persons, as knowing, that 'Obtrectatio est stultorum thesaurus, quem in linguis gerunt.'

But if all these attempts prove successless, there is that yet behind, which shall justify the whole charge, or at least the author, in filling up his bill with so many prodigious falsities. And this is, my 'blaspheming the Lord's prayer,' which is exaggerated with many tragical expressions and hideous exclamations: as indeed who can lay too heavy a load on so horrid a crime? But how if this should not prove so? How, if by all his outcries he should but adorn and set forth his own forgeries? This I know, that I do and ever did believe, that that prayer is part of the canonical Scripture, which I would not willingly blaspheme. I do believe that it was composed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and have vindicated it from being thought a collection and composition of such petitions as were then in use among the Jews, as some learned men had, I think unadvisedly, asserted it to be. I do and ever did believe it the most perfect form for prayer that ever was composed; and the words of it so disposed by the divine wisdom of our blessed Saviour, that it comprehends the substance of all the matter of prayer to God. I do and did always believe, that it ought to be continually meditated on, that we may learn from thence, both what we ought to pray for, and in what manner; neither did I ever think a thought, or speak a word, unsuitable to these assertions. Wherein then, doth this great blasphemy lie? Unto two heads it must be reduced.

1. That I judge not, that our Lord Jesus Christ in the giving of this prayer unto his disciples, did prescribe unto them the precise use or repetition of those words, but only taught them what to pray for, or how.

Now although it may be this man doth not, yet all men of any tolerable learning or reading, know, that this assertion relating only to the different interpretations of one expression,

indeed of one word, in one of the evangelists, hath been owned and allowed by learned men of all parties and persuasions. He may, if he please, consult Grotius, Musculus, and Cornelius a Lapide, to name one of a side for his information. But,

2. I have delivered other things concerning the use of it, in my book against the Socinians.

Whereunto I shall only say, that he who differs from others in the manner of the use of any thing, may have as reverend an esteem of the thing itself as they; and herein I shall not give place unto any man that lives on the earth, with respect unto the Lord's prayer. It is true, I have said, that there were manifold abuses in the rehearsal of it amongst people ignorant and superstitious; and did deliver my thoughts, it may be too freely and severely, against some kind of repetition of it. But as for the ridiculous and impudent charge of blasphemy hence raised by this pitiful calumniator, I am no way concerned in it. No more am I with that lie, which hath been now reported to the satiety of its first broachers and promoters: namely, that I should 'put on my hat, upon the repetition of it;' it was, as I remember, about fifteen years ago, that such a rumour was raised, by I know not whom, nor on what occasion. It was somewhat long before I heard any whisper of it, as is the manner in such cases. But so soon as I did attain a knowledge that such a slander had been reported and scattered abroad, I did cause to be published, in English and French, a declaration of its notorious falsity, in the year 1655. But so prone are many to give entertainment to false reproaches of them, whom on any account they are displeased with; so unwilling to part with a supposed advantage against them, though they know it to have been put into their hand by the mistakes, folly, or malice of others; that the same untruth hath been several times since repeated and republished, without the least taking notice that it was publicly denied, condemned, and the authors of it challenged to give any tolerable account of their report. Only of late, one learned person, meeting it afresh, where its admittance would have been to his advantage (namely Mr. Durel, in his answer unto the apology of some nonconformists) had the ingenuity to acknowledge the public disclaimure of any such practice so

long since made and published, and thereon at least to suspend his assent to the report itself.

I am, Sir, quite weary of repeating the instances of this man's notorious falsehood and unjust accusations; I shall therefore overlook the remainder of them on this head, that I may give you one of his intolerable weakness and ignorance. And this lies in his attempt to find out contradictions between what I have written in several places about toleration, and liberty of conscience, p. 67. For because I say, that 'Pernicious errors are to be opposed and extirpated by means appointed, proper, and suitable thereunto;' as also, that it is the 'duty of the magistrate to defend, protect, countenance, and promote the truth;' the man thinks that these things are inconsistent with liberty of conscience, and such a toleration, or forbearance, as at any time I have pleaded for. But if any man should persuade him to let those things alone, which either he hath nothing to do withal, or doth not understand, it may be he would accommodate him with a sufficient leisure, and more time than he knows well how to dispose of.

II. His last attempt is upon some sayings, which he calls my principles, in the representation whereof, whether he hath dealt with any greater regard to truth and honesty, than are the things we have already passed through, shall be briefly considered.

The first, as laid down in the contents prefixed to this sorry chapter, is in these words: 'That success in business doth authoricate its cause; and that if God's providence permits a mischief, his will approves it.'

There are two parts, you see, of this principle; whereof the first is, that success will justify a cause in business; that is, as I take it, any one: and secondly, that which God permits, he doth approve. Now as both parts of this principle are diabolically false, so in their charge on me also; so that I must betake myself again to the example of the friar, and say, 'Mentitur impudentissime.' A cause is good or bad, before it hath success one way or other. And that which hath not its warranty in itself, can never obtain any from its success. The rule of the goodness of any public cause, is the eternal law of reason, with the just legal rights and interests of men. If these make not a cause good, success

will never mend it. But when a cause on these grounds is so indeed, or is really judged such by them that are engaged in it, not to take notice of the providence of God in prospering men in the pursuit of it, is to exclude all thoughts of him and his providence from having any concern in the government of the world. And if I, or any other, have at any time applied this unto any cause, not warranted by the only rule of its justification, it no way reflects on the truth of the principle which I assert; nor gives countenance to the false one, which he ascribes unto me. For the latter clause of this pretended principle, that if God's providence permit a mischief, his will approves it, I suspect there is some other ingredient in it, besides lying and malice, namely, stupid ignorance. For it is mischief in a moral sense that he intends, nothing being the object of God's approbation or disapprobation, on any other account. It would therefore seem very strange, how any one, who hath but so much understanding as to know that this principle would take away all differences between good and evil, should provide himself of so much impudence, as to charge it on me.

Another principle, in pursuit of the same design, he lays down as mine, p. 46, namely, 'That saints may retain their holiness in the act of sinning, and that whatever law they violate, God will not impute it to them as a sin.'

There seems to be two parts of this principle also. The first is, that saints may retain their holiness in the act of sinning. I know not well what he means by this part of his principle, and yet do, for some reasons, suppose him to be more remote from the understanding of it than I am, although the words are his own. If he mean, that the act of sinning is not against, or an impeachment of holiness, it is a ridiculous contradiction. If he mean, that every actual sin doth not deprive the sinner of all holiness; he is ridiculous himself, if he assert that it doth, seeing 'there is no man that doeth good, and sinneth not.' The framing of the last clause of this principle smells of the same cask; and as it is charged on me, is false. Whatever law of God any man breaks, it is a sin, is so judged of God, and by him imputed so far unto the sinner, as to judge him guilty thereof, whoever he be. But God doth not impute every sin unto believers unto judgment and condemnation. And if he can

understand any thing in the books quoted by him, he will find that there is no more in them towards what he reflects upon, but that God will by his grace preserve true believers from falling into such sins, as whereby they should totally and finally lose their faith, fall from grace, and be cast out of God's covenant. This principle I own, and despise his impotent, ignorant, and ridiculous defamation of it.

His third principle is about praying by the Spirit, which he chargeth at the highest rate, as that which will destroy all government in the world.

I know well enough, whence he hath learned this kind of arguing. But I have no reason to concern myself particularly in this matter. The charge, for aught I know, as here proposed, falls equally on all Christians in the world; for whether men pray by a book, or without a book, if they pray not by the Spirit, that is, the assistance of the Spirit of God, they pray not at all. Let therefore the Scripture and Christianity answer for themselves; at present in this charge I am not particularly concerned.

Thus, sir, I have complied with your desire, unto a perusal of this confused heap of malicious calumnies, which otherwise I had absolutely in silence put off to the judgment of the great day. It may be this author hath scarce yet cast up his account, nor considered what it is to lend his fingers to others to thrust into the fire, which they would not touch themselves. For whilst they do, or may, if they please, enjoy their satisfaction in his villany and folly, the guilt and shame of them will return in a cruciating sense upon his own understanding and conscience. When this shall befal him, as it will do assuredly, if he be not utterly profligate, he will find no great relief in wishing that he had been better advised; nor in considering, that those, who rejoice in the calumny, do yet despise the sycophant. I am, Sir,

Your, &c.

J. O.

ORATIONES V.

CLARISSIMI ET DOCTISSIMI VIRI,

JOANNIS OWEN, S. T. P.

IN CELEBERRIMA OXONIENSI ACADEMIA HABITÆ, DUM PROCANCELLARII MUNUS PER QUINQUENNIUM ILLIC ADMINISTRAVIT.

His alia oratio accedit, ejusdem academiæ nomine ad Richardum Cromwellum habita, cum Cancellarii officium anno 1658, suscepit.

ORATIONES V.

ORATIO I.[a]

Eo tandem devenisse fata academiæ, ut post tot veneranda nomina, verenda capita, artium ac scientiarum promos condos, et dictatores, is chorum duceret, qui pæne agmen claudit, vos vere dolere plusquam persentisco, academici. Neque sane mihi admodum arridet rerum hæc nostrarum qualiscunque dispositio, qua ad desideratissimam matrem, longo post intervallo, reditus quasi præludia operosæ difficilisque provinciæ administratione agere cogor. At nullius infortunii remedia sunt querelæ. Viros graves et honestos in quocunque casu positos dedecent gemitus. Erecti animi est prementi oneri fortius obniti. 'Ita,' enim, ut cum comico loquar, 'est vita hominum, quasi cum ludas tesseris; si illud, quod maxime opus est jactu, non cadit; illud, quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas.'[b] Cunctis pæne, quorum provectior ætas, diuturniore rerum usu subactius ingenium, multo pulvere scholastico exsudati doctorum tituli, magnam, nec incassum, sui expectationem dederunt, navim academicam, heu! longum nimis procellis agitatam deserentibus; ex illius, cujus imperio refragari nobis haud fas est, propensa in me voluntate et iniqua æstimatione, cui nequicquam renisæ sunt intensissimæ obtestationes, hujusce vero senatus annuente suffragio, evocatus, quo vix est ineptior alter, ad gubernaculum accedo. In quæ tempora, quos hominum mores, qualia judiciorum divortia, grassantibus ubique ob studia partium dissidiis atque calumniis, quos animorum motus acerbiores et *παραπικράσματα*, affectus denique quo fastu, qua ærugine obsessos, inciderunt fasces nostri academici, et scio, et doleo. Nec solum nos seculi genio distrahimur, sed et indies alia conspectior incedit fundi literarii calamitas. Spreta nimirum sacrosancta legum auctoritate, superiorum reverentia, vigili malevolorum invidia, contemptis pæne moribundæ matris academiæ lachrymis ac singultibus, cum æterno gentis togatæ nominis dispendio, nec sine summo totius *περιπάτου* discrimine, detestanda

[a] Hæc oratio habita est anno 1652, cum procancellarii munus primum est ingressus.
[b] Terent. Adelph. iv. 7. 21.

audacia, et licentia plane Epicurea, extra omnes modestiæ ac pietatis cancellos, heu! nimia studiosorum portio vagatur. Egone ideo idoneus, qui huic nodo, cui frustra pacatissimis temporibus insudarunt tot tantique heroes, nutanti rerum omnium conditione cuneum admoverem? Οὐχ οὕτως τετύφωμαι, academici. Si hominis ita inepte sibi adblandientis partes mihi sumerem, imo si vel levicula hujusmodi animum subiret cogitatio, totus ipse mihi displicerem. Non ita remotus domo, aut procul a meipso dego, non ita lamiarum instar disposui ocellos, quin quam sit doctrinæ, prudentiæ, gravitatis, sapientiæ mihi curta supellex, probe noverim. Lucullum vel gregarii militis officii rudem, peritum nullo negotio evadentem imperatorem, ita ut quem πολέμων ἄπειρον dimisit urbs, totius rei militaris ἔμπειρον acceperit exercitus, tanquam naturæ ostentum celebravit antiquitas. Bono animo este, academici, prodigia nulla fero; qui ex latebris ruralis secessus, armorum strepitu, evangelii causa in ultimas hujus insulæ, nec non transmarinas oras, excursionibus, aulæ tumultu, rei academicæ administrandæ imperitus, recessi, imperitus etiam huc accedo.

Quid ergo, malum, inquies, hoc est dementiæ? Cur provinciam hanc, cui administrandæ, nedum ornandæ, non sis idoneus, suscepisti? Pessime in te, in academiam, in senatum hunc venerandum consuluisti. Bona verba, auditores, summorum virorum judicio, votis, imperio, precibus, obnoxio non penitus deficit aut spes, aut animus. Ἀνδραγαθημάτων qualiumcunque haud ipsi sumus scaturigines. Ὁ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι, et qui 'ex ore infantium fundit fortitudinem,' defectus omnes, quos vel foras retuli, vel intus sensi, gratiose supplere et vires administrare potis est. Mihi ideo propriis viribus, ac παῤῥησίᾳ, et succedaneo adminiculo, favore academico, quod sciam, aut meruerim, destituto, hoc tamen restat, illi ut me totus dedam, 'qui dat omnibus benigne, nec exprobrat.' Perennem ille auxiliorum fontem constituit Christum, qui nulli non pio conamini εὔκαιρον suppeditat βοήθειαν, nostra nisi obstat ὀλιγοπιστία: inde lumen, inde vires, inde spiritus mihi expectandi, imo orandi sunt. Illius ideo præsentiæ gratiose promissæ innixus, pro statu temporum, et occasione rerum, quam, divina ita providentia disponente, nacti sumus, unica conscientiæ integritate, aliorum adjumentorum et ornamen-

torum omnium vices obeunte, nec propendente, nec dependente genio, negotio huic me accingo.

Si modo bonorum obsequi studiis, inservire commodis, opem ferre egenis, et quibus est res angusta domi, si in extricandis immerito perplexis, impeditis, aut turbatis, operam insumere mihi liceat; si vel in confinio et proxima parte virtutis versantibus mansueti ulla animi officia præstare possim; pacis, famæ, studiorum, quorum dispendio, nihil usus circuitione, sciens videnque compendiose lito, haud ita pœnitenda forsan erit jactura. At si Bibuli consulatus segnis ac vilis, si Sisyphi labor, volvendo semper eodem revolventem negotiolorum acervum frustraneus ac inutilis, mihi contingerent; si in dirimendis de lana caprina litibus, si in terrorem miseris mortalibus et vitiorum ægris incutiendo, vel pœnam infligendo, vel in ejusmodi solum ingratis peragendis sudandum sit; ne infelici adjudicarer Caucaso, damnatorias tabellas quavis prece, vel quocunque pretio redemptas velim.

Non quod in reprimendis vitiis, repurgandis sordibus, ne sentibus, spinis, tribulisque obsita horreret academia, conatus satis laudabiles exeri non possunt. Imo vos omnes, qui conscientiæ propriæ, qui famæ publicæ, qui perenni florentissimæ academiæ saluti, qui reipublicæ hujusce, *νεοτεύκτου* licet, sed *θεοτεύκτου*, utilitati, vel mica bonæ animæ litatis; vos, inquam, omnes, vestramque opem, consilium, vires, diligentiam, ne flaccescat gubernatorum reverentia, nutet superiorum dignitas, evanescat antiqua studiosorum gravitas, industria, compositi mores, ne demum omnium bonorum, malis omnibus despecta, jaceat auctoritas, appello. Me vero quod attinet, munusque hoc recens impositum, si qui sint ignavi, ebriosi, ludiones, nugatores, circulatores, superiorum contemptores, legirupæ, noctivagi, noti juventutis corruptores, bonorum osores, cultus divini neglectores, vel alia ejusmodi academiæ carcinomata et ulcera, neque me illorum mores, neque illos meam hanc qualemcunque *προστασίαν* ferre posse spes est. In hac vero parte provinciæ nostræ ornanda, si quid durius, si quid, quod tamen fieri non oportet, inclementius, in quemcunque constitutum fuerit, id omne temporum necessitati, et conservandæ misere fluctuanti reipublicæ literariæ acceptum ferendum esse æqui rerum arbitri facile agnoscent. Nec erit forsan, cur ob

nostram tenuitatem despectui sit facinorosorum et delicatulorum turbæ academiæ auctoritas. Etenim ut bonis omnibus omnimodo prodesse statutum est, sic malis haud cedere itidem indubium. At parcius ista. Quæ agenda sunt quidem, sed non sine ullius boni, aut mitis ingenii, quadam ægritudine peragi queunt, quoad fieri potest, deprecanda et evitanda esse consentient omnes, quibus salit aliquid *lævæ sub parte mamillæ*.

Majora itaque, et præclaris aliorum hoc ipso seculo omne genus inceptis, quibus paria præterlapsæ ætates facinora non ediderunt, aliqua ex parte respondentia, in orbe nostro tentanda esse arbitramur. An solis academicis, Anglorum nomine celebri fama per totum orbem diffuso, libet esse ingloriis? Consulta patrum, tropæa militum, incrementa gloriæ rei civilis ac militaris, quæ dederunt, quibus est commissa, senatores, ac duces, horret Europa. Absit, academici, ut peculiare nostrum depositum, religionis ac literarum honos, quasi omnino seculo impares essemus, solum vilescat. Dum in omni laudabili conatu alii haud contemnendos faciunt progressus, vix, aut ne vix quidem, nos ad antiqua revertimur? Imo, quid nisi nostra segnities, et aliud agendo consumptæ vires, ut superiorum temporum, uti aiunt, a nonnullis tantopere desideraretur, in causa est? Eminuere, fateor, tum temporis nonnulli linguarum peritia, eloquentiæ laude, scientiarum lumine, veterum scriniorum monumenta scrutandi diligentia, et ruspandis antiquitatis ruderibus clari; quibus omnibus et singulis, quo minus debitus honor et gloria, cultus et reverentia nominis constent, et sint perennes, non sum adeo vecordis animæ, nec tam extra anni solisque vias positus, ut ullo modo interpellem. At, pro pudor! quale studiosorum vulgus? Quanta orbis literati pars tenebris offusa? Ponite senile supercilium, pingue otium, aliarum ambitionum inanes titulos, micantibus undique literarum præmiis; per multos enim annos, qui serio rem agebant, apparuere rari 'nantes in gurgite vasto.' Eo vero jam redierunt res academiæ, ut nisi pietatem, fidem, mores compositos, modestiam, cum summa in omni studiorum genere diligentia adhibeamus, quin cum perenni dedecore, dedignitate, statu et conditione hac honesta nobis periclitandum sit, non est ambigendum. Hæc ergo Rhodus, hic saltus noster. Quicquid consilio, prudentia, illibato virtutis exemplo, quicquid

denique summorum virorum auctoritate, tantillo scilicet temporis spatio, eoque tantis rerum ac animorum motibus agitato, quod ex bonarum artium et literarum, explosis belli terriculamentis, παλιγγενησίᾳ excucurrit, præstari potuerit, id omne antecessorum nostrorum laudum cumulo lubens addico. At quibus omnia ex voto successerunt, quorum sanctioribus inceptis undequaque responderunt eventus, numero vix sunt totidem, quot Thebarum portæ. In magnis voluisse sat est; nec nostram industriam, si qua est, præcluserunt molimina aliorum præclare gesta; multo minus succedentium famæ, si qui sint, obesse poterunt in administranda hac provincia imbecilli nostri conatus.

ORATIO II.[a]

Bonum factum, procuratores. Neque enim animam agit academia, ut opus habeat testamentum nuncupare, aut ut legatorum dispositione divitias suas in alumnos dispertire teneatur. Hucusque ergo, academici, quamvis, pro dolor! evasimus, dicendum est tamen, evasimus. Viximus, dum ipsum hoc vixisse nonnihil, imo magnum fuit; ævo scilicet seculi graves, et ipsius mundi mortalitate tantum non oppressi. Ostentent alii tropæa, hostium spolia, flosculorum sertis redimita capita, summæ pacis, et placidissimi recessus fructus uberiores; nos cicatrices, pulverem, et sudorem, erectas ad cælum manus, non penitus indigna Deo hominibusque colluctantia insignia circumferimus. Non enim umbratilem causam egimus, non de finibus regundis, de quibus tot annos bella incruenta, et pæne ludicra, intulerunt imbelles finitimi; sed de tota possessione, sacro antiquæ pietatis deposito, præsentis spe ac semine, dictu nefas! nobis contentio fuit. Prostrato œnopolas, mimas, balatrones, devictos cerevisiarios, noctivagos, scurras, aliasque hominum quisquilias supplices in scenam productas, dispansa gentis togatæ pomœria, instaurata epomidum et epitogiorum ephippia, honestis nominibus celebrata, nolite expectare. Hæc illorum gloria, hoc decus, quibus mollissimis temporibus, et longo otio de-

[a] Hæc oratio anno 1654, in comitiis academicis, habita fuisse videtur, cum procancellarii officium iterum administravit.

ductis, tot tantaque moliri placuit. Hoc unice nobis in votis fuit, cum officii ratio postularet, ut publice aliquid vobis edisseremus, nec tantum superesset dicendum, *fuimus* academici.

Tantum vero cum hoc sit, tamque insigne privilegium, nondum periisse, non nisi Dei immortalis beneficio illud par est deberi. Ei ideo ἐυεργέτῃ optimo, sospitatori unico, salutis fonti, qui disjectis undique ac demersis, cæli ruina et violentia, majoribus, imo prætoriis navibus, portuosam cymbulæ nostræ exhibuit providentiam, quicquid apud nos pium aut utile restat, quicquid meliori nota et virtutis nomine inter mortales dignum censetur, in ipso limine dicemus. Qui nihil divinum, nihil ope mortali grandius, in declinantis rei literariæ subsidium et fulcimentum venire sentit, illum rerum divinarum pariter ac humanarum socordia, et negligentia supina laborare, cum res ipsa oculis et prope manibus teneatur, non est ambigendum. Rubum ardentem, nec consumptum, stupuit olim magnus nomotheta. Præclarum et antiquum qui spectaret ædificium, disjectis undique pedamentis et adminiculis, in ipso pæne aere pendulum, mole sua sibi ipse ruinam, aliis perniciem minitabundum, contra vin tamen procellarum, ventorum, et turbinum vitrices et triumphales attollens summitates; velut immota rupes, cui toties horrifico fragore nequicquam sese illiserint nimbus et hyems; occultam illam vim et admirabilem, quæ tantæ moli sustinendæ, tot oppugnationibus propellendis par esset, venerabundus suspiceret. Gratiosam igitur Dei O. M. providentiam recolite, academici, et perenni literariæ diuturnitati quotquot bene vultis, auditores, quæ gymnasia, adeoque ipsam academiam, communem nostram, qua literati sumus, matrem, adhuc sartam tectam conservavit.

Neque tamen hæc ideo a nobis dicuntur, quasi fautores nullos, nullos advocatos invenisset grandæva mater academia, qui, ne inter tumultuosi seculi dedecora literarum lapsus et ruina numeraretur, strenue præcaverunt. Habet etiam adhuc deus O. M. qui honorem suum, habet academia, qui salutem suam pro virili tueri satagunt; viros scilicet summo honore constitutos, et nisi mortalium ingratissimi audire vellemus, a nobis in æternum nominandos. Hi sunt, qui tumultuantis plebeculæ, aliorum scilicet perpaucorum nebulonum veneno perfusæ, compescuerunt murmura, et

imbelles contempsere minas. Et cum eo usque audaciæ proruperit quorundam hominum, dicam, an jumentorum, stupor et barbaries, ut in ipso senatu libellis supplicibus vociferationes, seu potius imprecationes nonnullorum e fæce seculi, de tollendis academiis rudere ausi sint; non sine indignatione summa, spiritu heroico et plane divino, honoratissimis ignorantiæ patronis, patriæ excerebratoribus, os vile obstruxerunt, parati omne nostrum periculum subire suo. Nec defuisse istiusmodi viros aut conatus testor celeberrimam toto orbe bibliothecam, irritis inimicorum domi forasque augusto illi sacrario avide inhiantium votis, intactam; et si non libris doctioribus, at librario doctissimo auctam et ornatam. Ipsam testor academiam, fatali pæne literarum interstitio emergentem, viris undequaque doctissimis, de religione et literatura optime meritis, recens refertam. Hoc unum condonate, quod me indignum, inutilem gregi vestro vestro ascribere voluerunt; hanc unam labem abstergite, cætera fulgent.

Iisdem succenturiatus processit magnum nomen nobis dicendum, auditores, Honoratissimus Cancellarius. Hic est, quem toties accepimus profitentem, se nolle honesto illo nomine diutius ornari, quam dignum tandem aliquid eo nomine efficiendi spes non minima effulgeret. Qui pietate et ingenii cultu, in subjugandis hostibus vel barbarissimis, plus retulit sub Deo suo opis et subsidii, quam ut se vivo et rerum pæne clavum tenente, pietatem et ingenii culturam omnem pessundatas et conculcatas, triumphantibus illum victis et conjuratis hostibus, ab impietate et barbarie intueri possit. Illum, qui feros et erraticos domuit Hiberniæ Nomadas, qui mores, virtutes, pudorem Scotorum monticolarum perspexerit, qui

Πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα, καὶ νόον ἔγνω,[b]

posse tandem ipsam deperire barbariem, inhonesta est, et homine sano indigna cogitatio. Irato prorsus aversoque Deo res nostræ agitari viderentur, si primi, si soli sub ejus auspiciis pereamus; qui non tantum omni bello, sed et singulis prœliis, quibus toties providentiæ discrimen subiit, victor evasit. Inauspicato sane togatam manum copiis suis adjunxisse censendus esset, si ea parte primum marcesceret triumphales laurus. Haud illi deerit procul omni dubio in

[b] Hom. Odyss. i. 3.

re nostra procuranda divina illa indulgentia, quæ reliquis omnibus inceptis ei ita semper præsto adfuit, uti Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, quod dicitur; ut illud ethnici poetæ ad imperatorem Christianum decantare liceat,

O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat æther,
Et conjurati venieunt in classica venti[c]

Hucusque ideo, eo duce, victore Deo, ut libera et optimarum artium gloria celebris, non ut injux et efferata evadat patria, contendimus. Quisquamne hominum adeo inverecunde stolidus, et mentis inops censendus est, ut gentem non ineptam, immensis laboribus, vigiliis, votis, lacrymis, suspiriis, tanto sanguinis, nummorum, possessionum dispendio, tot annos sudasse, ut sub desideratissimo reipublicæ titulo asinorum clausum, vel jumentorum mandram conderet, putare posse videatur? Si qui vero, ut erit forsan unus et alter, ad bombardarum tonitru, tanquam ad cataractas Nili, ita obsurduerunt, ut rationis, ejus nimirum qua homines sumus, nihil possint aut audire, aut percipere; quin tandem, imo brevi sese explosos et pessimo fœtore, suorum tormentorum instar, ejectos sentiant, nullus dubito. Imo ausim dicere rempublicam nostram aut literarum fore fautricem, aut nullam: nisi funditus delere gentem (et religionem nostram) fortean rebus prosperis nimis fidentem, vagam, et tumidam, sanguine et cineribus iterum aspergere, et non indecoro pulvere sordidam reddere constituit Deus O. M. non omnis morietur academia.

Macte ideo este ingenio et virtutis gloria, probata juvenum corona, flos patriæ, gentis honos, gregis Christi spes non minima, feretis protinus hic etiam voti et consilii nostri pretium et βραβεῖον: nec segregata prorsus omnis spes est, quin ex vobis tandem emergant, quibus merito

doctior orbis
Submissis tradat fascibus imperium.

Vos etiam, doctores literatissimi, quoniam purpuræ vestræ radiis ferundis etiam vulgi, utcunque ignobilis et indocti, nunc temporis sufficit oculorum acies, quin virtutum et scientiarum spendore, laboribus et vigiliis ecclesiæ et academiæ causa susceptis, antiquam et debitam venerationem etiam oculatissimis extorquere progrediamini, nemo nisi invidia stupuit, aut fascinavit pietatis odium, ibit inficias. Θέατρον

[c] Claud. 3. cons. Honor. 96.

ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις,[d] et actorum nuda virtute stamus; nec pomposos titulos, ulteriores honoris gradus, opima beneficia, principum aut magnatum favores, fugacis ævi blandimenta, affectamus, sed pro vita animaque magnæ matris academiæ contendimus.

Duram quis forsan exclamabit sortem et onerosam! et, 'O terque quaterque beatos,' quibus quotannis in scenam prodire, et choragio nescio quo phaleratis, mutas pæne sustinuisse personas satis erat pro dignitate et honore; quibus ampliores redditus, titulorum veneranda gravitas, et adulatoriis quibusdam delinimentis facillime aucupatus principum favor, dederunt malignum spernere vulgus!

Ast, apage sis, ignava vota, et indigna suspiria. Natos nos potius in exemplar cogitemus, nec minimo ducamus honori, quod nos amicorum inimicorumque sub oculis tanto pignore certare voluit pater clementissimus, quod aliqua saltem rerum difficultate quid possemus experiri velit. Quod aliis ideo calamitas videtur, nobis sit virtutis occasio. Hoc ideo tantum, missis curis et querelis, metu et dolore ad hominum vulgus demandatis, nobis incumbit, ut vel scientiarum et virtutum nostra industria fructibus floreat, vel composite et decenter aliena culpa in cineres suos dilabatur academia. Sed quorsum hæc?

> Prudens futuri temporis exitum
> Caliginosa nocte premit Deus,
> Ridetque si mortalis ultra
> Fas trepidat. Quod adest memento
> Componere æquus.[e]

Quod officii ratio postulat, quod beneficia Dei O. M. flagitant, quod bonorum omnium vota expetunt, quod aliorum casus et ruina, quos perdendos dementavit divina Nemesis, docent, pietatem, religionem, virtutem, scientiam, diligenter colamus; cæterum rerum omnium exitus Θεοῦ ἐν γούνασι κεῖται. Quid denuo faciemus, dabit Deus; quid hucusque fecerimus, paucis accipite, academici.

Cum vitiis, quæ ampliori proventu inter mortales indies succrescunt, nobis et antecessoribus nostris commune fuit certamen. Dilabantem amnem novis semper ex fontibus minus forsan lucidis, imo turbidis aquarum fluctibus, subinde auctum et adimpletum omnibus vanitatis bullulis, vitiorum limo immunem quis potest præstare? Nempe socordium et

[d] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [e] Horat. Carm. iii. 29, 30.

impiorum parentum delicta, ineptiam, stultitiam, negligentiam pædagogorum, paucis exceptis, ignavi pæne ubique pecoris, immerita luit academia. Ad spurcitiem domi avide ingurgitatam hic resorbendam advolant nonnulli; et tamen quos huc vitiorum gravidos, et fœdis domesticorum exemplis dehonestatos mittunt, ut extemplo fiant philosophi, et illico frugi evadant, expectant stulti parentes.

Ὡς ἀργαλέον πρᾶγμ' ἐστὶν
Δοῦλον γενέσθαι παραφρονοῦντος δεσπότου.[f]

Duram sane provinciam! Integros et sanos tantum summa cum artis gloria dimittunt, quibus commissa est corporum sanatio: omnes seu artis defectus, seu artificum lapsus, longa nocte tegunt vespillones. At incuratos animorum morbos, et turgidos vitiorum inflatus, ubique, non sine summo inter imperitos nostro dedecore, circumferunt immedicabiles nebulones.

Huic autem malo remedium adhibendo, ut hanc saltem bene merentibus gratiam rependam, non defuerunt, imo profuerunt plurimum, cum hujus, tum superioris anni procuratores; quorum nimirum inculpatæ probitati, invictæ patientiæ, prudentiæ insigni, bonarum literarum promovendi studio singulari, industriæ vero pæne stupendæ, aliquid saltem pacis et quietis, si non multum famæ et bonorum morum, debere academia est manifestum. Nec sine numine fuit, ut, deflexo paulum tramite, ad munus procuratorium vir ille promoveretur, qui ad vias rectas et regulares non sine summa diligentia et virtute non paucos reduceret. Porro in administranda re reliqua academica, collegiorum et aularum præfectos, laude illa, intelligentes tempora, ut nosceret academia quid sibi faciendum esset, defraudandos non esse, si non credet ingratum seculum, fortassean dicet posteritas. Imo illorum ope et consilio, quamvis non decus aliquod aut nitorem assecuto, tamen sine insigni ulla togatæ gentis jactura, fasces deponere mihi ipsi contingat. Nec omnino sane inerti otio contabuimus, quamvis huc tantum rediit votorum summa, ut eo fruamur. Cætera de nobis fascibusque nostris, quod procul dubio præstat, taceo; neque enim unquam altius spiravi, quam ne commodioris hominis, peritioris rectoris, vigilantioris præfecti, prudentioris moderatoris, vices difficillimis temporibus suppleri, nimium lugeret academia.

[f] Aristoph. Plut. i. 1. 1.

Interea sciant amici atque inimici, imo exteri et posteri, quotquot honeste cupiunt rei literariæ, etiam qui cum ea nullum commercium volunt, neque ferias agere academiam, neque intra antecessorum septa (quasi doctum esse nihil aliud esset, quam doctos legisse, atque eorum sensus quamvis reconditos eruisse) sese continere; sed progressus, Deo hominibusque testibus, in dilatandis scientiarum pomœriis, in promovenda, una cum pietate et religione, re literaria quotidie ponere.

Testor theologiam, artium reliquarum dominam et magistram, cui ut prompte ancillentur prope est res nostra unica, non turbidam illam ex scholasticorum lacunis depromptam, nec communem illam tantum et disciplinabilem, a quamplurimis bonis sane viris, nec ineptis, in multifariis compendiolis traditam; sed liberam, puram, defæcatam, ex ipsorum fontium fontibus, adjuvante, imo totum opus perficiente, Spiritu et vi Dei omnipotentis, haustam adhibitisque omnibus veræ philosophiæ et scientiarum adminiculis, qui ei vel adjumento, vel ornamento esse possint, indies efflorescentem. Intima videmus sacrosanctæ veritatis penetralia reserata, abditosque vitalis paginæ sensus erutos et propinatos. *Hinc lucem et pocula sacra.* Conciones ad populum non phaleratas illas, et ineptis verborum crepitaculis, ad aurem vani et imperiti vulgi tinnientes; sed pietatem, *φιλοπονίαν αἰσθητήρια* in sacris *γεγυμνασμένα* spirantes, frequentissimas: exercitia quædam recens instituta, nonnulla postliminio restituta, recuperatam aliquatenus disciplinæ gravitatem, exulantem et triumphatam reductam pietatem, fas esset celebrare. Disputationes etiam theologicas redivivas memorarem, nisi absentium aliquorum negligentia, præsentium vero quorundam socordia fecisset, ut ex incepto illo honesto sane et conamine laudabili, academiæ ratiocinio, quam academicorum rationi, hactenus melius consultum fuisset. Absit tamen ut hinc tandem proventus ipsos sulcos oneraturi expectationi renuntiarem. Non enim tantum messem, quod aiunt, in herba habemus, summæ nimirum spei ad frugem et fructum juventutis; sed et est in procinctu veteranorum haud contemnenda manus, quæ non tantum amicæ veritatis velitationi, prout pro more fit in academia, parata est; sed quæ Latiali Vejovi bruta fulmina e manibus excutere, et reliquas extraneorum copias

civitati magni regis, Dei O. M. δεινῶς imminentes, minitantes dira, profligare et dispalare novit.

Et sane ad veternum nobis excutiendum, nunquam post natum in orbe Christianum nomen, donis, quibus veritatis divinæ cultores liberaliter instruxit pater clementissimus, magis opus fuit. Quam enim, Deus bone! detestanda turma, quam fœda hæreticorum, fanaticorum, et enthusiastarum colluvies sponsam Christi sub ipsis sponsi sanctissimis oculis pæne rapit, stupratque? In eam scilicet puram, castam, undique 'turba ruunt luxuriosa; proci.' Cum igitur,

> Ut jugulent homines, surgunt de nocte latrones:
> Ut teipsum serves, non expergisceris?[g]

Et quod ad cumulum addit, satis nequiter proventum est: quo enim quisque ab omni solida doctrina imparatior est, eo majori cum supercilio, et confidentius de gravissimis quæstionibus judicium sibi arrogat. Proveniunt oratores novi, stulti, adolescentuli, qui nec eruditi sunt, nec se non esse eruditos sentiunt.

Ἀνδρίζεσθε ergo, academici, nec amœni recessus sopore perfusi, dulcedine exitio vicina, præsertim cum ὑπὸ παντὶ λίθῳ σκορπίος ὑποδύεται, sinite ut ineptos, indoctos, βωμολόγους, vaniloquos, plus contra veritatem, quam pro veritate vos posse, sentiat Christianus orbis. Victorias quas reportarunt, quos egerunt triumphos Athenarum nostrarum Miltiades, Juellus, Rainoldus, Twissus, aliique, recolite, mentemque et industriam Themistoclis induite, neque nobis vivis despectum Dei dominium, contemptam gratiam, conculcatum fœdus sempiternum, impune ferant vel inscite blaterantes, vel elatiori cothurno rhetoricantes novatores. Undique circumstant observatores, qui mollitiem virtuti, errores veritati, tenebras luci, tumultus paci, quovis pretio a vobis præferri vellent, et ut præferantur expetunt, et expectant.

> Hoc Ithacus velit, hoc magno mercentur Atridæ.[h]

Sunt qui literarum imperium se solos obtinuisse autumant; et quia cæteros mortales fastuose præ se contemnunt, vos istiusmodi esse, qui facile et merito contemni possint, efflictim cupiunt. Sunt etiam qui vitiorum et ἀκαρπίας nostræ obtentu academiarum ruinæ avidissime inhiant, et altera parte urgent, punguntque. Una autem virtute utrosque

[g] Horat. Epist. i. 2. 32. [h] Virg. Æn. ii. 104.

circumveniamus, ut non sine summo dedecore illos fastus et περιαυτοφωνίας, hos invidiæ et ignorantiæ pudeat, pœniteatque.

Ad sospitatorem pertinet industria nostra, ipsum Christum habemus agonothetam. Nostris vigiliis, studiis, laboribus, innititur veritatis gloria, religionis honos, artium et scientiarum splendor, ipsiusque demum non minima reipublicæ salus et felicitas. Ignaviam, animalium ratione gaudentium labem et opprobrium, senescentis seculi pestem pæne unicam, ignorantiæ, tenebrarum, sordium, et vitiorum omnium proxenetam, literarum et literatorum contemptus prodromum certissimum, diligenter, imo animose excutite, juvenes dilectissimi, germana matris proles, insurgentis seculi quoquo verget pars nobilis futura. Hæc illa Circe est, quæ nonnullius spei adolescentulos, luxuriæ blanditiis pessime incantatos, fœdissimis inquinatos sordibus, et in porcorum haram et volutabrum pellectos quotidie deturpat. Invigilate ideo, mementote vos sacramento teneri, imo in arenam descendisse; frustra fugam, latebras, recessus meditamini; nequicquam hominum præjudicia, temporum iniquitatem, magnatum supercilia erga gentem togatam, patriæ ingratitudinem, quæ ossibus ejus vix pepercit, causamini. Aut dimicandum vobis est fortiter, aut quales quales artifices estis, pereundum turpiter. Placet etiam nobis otium, sed magis officium; placet amica studiis solitudo, sed magis studiosis, siqua est, benefica contentio. Eamus una igitur, erectis animis, comitantibus vigiliis, studiis, precibus, inimicorum quorumcunque tandem, qui male volunt luci et veritati, vices dolentes, quo fata academiæ, et omni casu benignior divina providentia, vocant. Mens serena, sua sorte contenta, mundi contemptrix, nihil nisi quod vile, sordidum, inhonestum, anima Christiana, generoso et libero pectore indignum, horrescens, nobiscum eat. Hæreat in funambulis, præstigiatorum acetabulis, stupeat Babylonios, agyrtas, astrologos, malignum et imperitum vulgus; stupeat, dum respublica tributum imponat, quod pendeant astrologi, quod olim, teste Suida,[1] factum est Alexandriæ, nomine βλακεννόμιον, quia solum stulti ad eos accedunt. Βλὰξ enim apud eos idem ac fatuus et amens fuit. Minas, arma, intentent atrocis sævitiæ et feritatis homunciones, scientiam,

[1] In voce Βλάξ.

veritatem, virtutem ipsam rideant, dicteriis excipiant, ὅσα οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦντες, siderati nebulones; ne grave rediret superstitionis et tenebrarum seculum timeant meticulosi; Spartam nos, quam nacti sumus, ornemus, serio militemus, in veritatis castra irruamus, cælum ipsum virtute petamus, nil desperandum, vexillum attollente Hon. Cancell. Christo duce, et auspice Christo.

ORATIO III.[a]

Delassatas artium omnium et scientiarum vires, et defatigatam ipsam oratoriam denuo solicitare, academici, nec opus est, nec animus. Quid possit facundia, ut in omni literatura viget valetque, ii, quos et muneris ratio, et efflorescentis ingenii fervor, alacriores et magis oneri reddiderunt, evidenti testimonio ante aures oculosque auditorum posuerunt. Elegantiarum omnium quod reliquum est, vices supplebit unica æqui ac recti conscientia, qua etiam tripudiare Musas, vetat vicinus fraterni sanguinis clamor. Si quid de laboribus et angustiis academiæ dicendum restat, ne ferias agere perpetuas videatur, id mihi negotii dari, ut ea enarrem, maxime arridet. Nempe ea apud nos, auditores, stat lege res literaria, ut gravissimas totius anni curas unius vel alterius dieculæ lætitia compensatas habeamus. Neque illos forsan, quibus res divinas pariter, ac eas, quæ apud humanum genus inter primas ponuntur, ornandi cura incumbit, palæstræ isti hilarioribus pro more elegantiis crebrius interspersæ diutius immorari deceat. Non quod solenniorum academiæ comitiorum honori, quorum, Deo ita gratiose disponente, triplicata jam vice lubens saltem pars aliqua fui, quidquam detractum iri velim; sed quod asperiores recessus sanctiores quas colimus Musas quærere, profiteri æquum est. Prout ideo benevolo erga nos almæ matris animo, quo nobis operosum hoc, quodcunque sit, studiorum nostrorum levamen sacrum esse voluit, gratulari liceat; ita gravitatis ejus et prudentiæ, quibus hæc bonorum negotia, malorum otiis promovendis nimis opportuna, incitatis passibus peragi jussit, infra laudem id omne est, quod dicere possumus. Nimirum

[a] Hæc oratio habita est anno 1655, in solennibus academiæ comitiis, cum procancellarii munere jam tertio functus est.

lubrica virtutum statio est, quibus in confinio vitiorum positis, proclivis ad deteriora lapsus. Ea est, pro dolor! humani ingenii pravitas. Non enim tantum, dum vos pulverem inter et sudorem, industriam in scholasticis hisce exercitiis defigitis, habent quod ignaviæ, quod luxuriæ suæ prætexant improbi; sed et inane gloriolæ aucupium, futurum superbiæ et desidiæ fomitem, hujusmodi inceptis, ad captandos sæpius quam par est eruditorum plausus destinatis, minime malorum suggestui aliquoties adhærere compertum est. Sufficiat ideo nonnullis hucusque vela ventis explicata porrexisse, aliis in margine ambulasse; ne ingruat turbo, ne dilabantur ripæ, jam contrahenda vela, jam referendi pedes. Nostri autem rerumque nostrarum, cum temporis occasio, et auditorum reverentia, rationem aliquam efflagitare videantur, eam, moræ cum simus jam omnes impatientes, strictim et quam fieri possit paucissimis absolvam.

Quoniam vero eos, qui fecerunt, proxime excepisse, qui præclara eorum facinora celebrarunt, semper æstimati sunt, ne res academiæ, per se satis amplæ et magnificæ, vero minores appareant, alicui, qui quæ sentit polite et copiose possit eloqui, et velit, provinciam hanc delegatam cuperem. Sed prout mihi, me juri et legibus almæ matris subducere, religio foret; ita supra bonum atque honestum de vestro candore anxium esse et solicitum, pæne esset flagitium.

Qualem vero se gessit academia, quæ tulit fecitque, quorum gratia aut odio flagravit, quibus fautoribus usa dignitatem aut pristinam sustinuit, aut amissam recuperavit, quo luctu, quibus casibus eam exercuit summus rerum omnium arbiter, fusius exponentem haud feret temporis angustia. Pauca ideo rerum capita summatim sunt delibanda.

Ne vero expectatione elati despicatui haberent referenda auditores, sciant adhunc plura nobis fuisse de salute, quam de gloria certamina. Ut scientiarum pomœria dilitaremus, cum tot annos Annibal fuerit ad portas, nemo nisi iniquus et sortis humanæ ignarus expectaret. Quibus nos nondum periisse magnum non est, iis qui perierunt instruendos amandamus; pluris sane constitit unius anni salus, quam multorum pridem gloria et honor. Quanto labore, qua industria, quibus vigiliis et molestiis, quo temporis, studiorum, fortunæ, amicorum dispendio, quo in ambiguis consilio, in extremis animo, res nostræ hactenus securitate septæ fuerunt,

neminem spero posthac experturum. Magistratus nostri in ipsa salutis discrimina fortunarumque communium incidisse honor sit, vel dedecus perpetuum.

Hinc vidimus armatas Musas, et Palladem cum hasta; neque quicquam famæ, aut gravitatis apud bonos ea re decoxit academia. Imo quod se suaque prudentia dignissimum est, fecit. Etenim in publicos hostes omnis homo miles est. Neque artes ullas profitemur, quæ naturam dediscere cogant. Extrema expectare, mihi ausos, malorum est, vel mulierum. Unico pacis amore ducti classicum cecinimus, neque cuiquam mortalium periculum ingerere, sed propriæ saluti tempestive consulere in votis fuit. Hunc animum qui criminantur, ut omnis juris, humani pariter ac divini, nostrarumque rerum conditionis ignaros se ostendunt, ita eorum scommata et convitia facile contemnimus. An ingenii cultus, quo nihil melius neque amplius in natura mortalium est, socordes et torpescentes redderet, inter sacrum et saxum positos? Sane dum ipsum hoc vixisse peccatum non sit, nec vituperationi opportuna sui tutela esse posse videtur. Quum vero ab iis, qui nihil egregium aut laude dignum aggredi aut ausi sint, aut possint, aliquod candoris vel grati animi indicium expectare, extremæ stultitiæ sit, ne nulli omnino videantur, quia præterea nihil sunt, lubenter eis maledicere permittamus. Sed tamen vix occasione hac arrepta me retineo, quin in totam ingratorum manum, quorum vitio nihil non mali inest, invehar. Id tantum nitar, ut hominibus bono publico natis, mederi aliorum incommodis solitis, auctor sim, ut quemcunque boni et magnifici animi fructum, iis, qui cum servili pæne sint conditione, nihil generosum aut honestum sapiant, erogaverint, nisi frustra niti, neque aliud se satagendo nisi odium quærere, cordi sit, eam omnem humanitatem non in homines insumptam, reputent. Sed pessimum illud genus hominum, quod diligentius metuit, quam meminit, quod cum pæne nihil unquam boni fecerit, tamen beneficia pro debitis exigit, utrum plures sint qui criminis arguunt, an qui ejus vestigiis insistunt, incertum est. Quoniam vero in humanum genus, egenum plerumque et opis indignum, qui ingrati animi testimonium ediderunt, peccare videantur, eos tacito bonorum omnium judicio, eique apud ipsos, hoc est malos, tribunali, ubi nemo nocens absolvetur, remitto. Quodcunque conatur, præmii

securum agit generosum pectus, et ipsa sibi satis mercedis est mens recti conscia. Interea haud vulgari lætitia perfunditur academia, quod nemo tandem gentem suam togatam destructam velit, nisi qui ipsam rempublicam funditus pessundatam cupiat, cum non ita pridem ab ipsa maxime metuit respublica. Ita est rerum vicissitudo. Quæ autem tumultuante plebecula, ferocientibus militibus, nutante senatu, strenue undique calumniantibus sycophantis, omni casu major meliorque providentia immunem ruina salvamque præstitit academiam; ne bonorum omnium amore jam flagrantem florentemque desereret, summa contentione interpellanda est.

Vulnus interea, quamvis pharmaco tempestive adhibito sanatum, quod tulimus, dissimulandum esse dolor pietasque vetant. Nempe principis facultatis inter primarios professores ob multijugem scientiam et raram eruditionem pæne principem amisimus. Illum, inquam, cui (ea est inanis seculi vanitas et ignavia) nihil unquam nisi ipsæ literæ fuere opprobrio. Quæ autem post summi viri fata, candidissimi pectoris quondam hospitium, invaserunt lites, odia, studiorumque partium inanes luctas, ne pudenda retegantur et recrudescant vulnera, prætereo. Equidem ut dignitatis et auctoritatis tuendæ gratia, qui gradum magistratus obtinerent in academia, illud honoris et præmii haberent, quod optari possint, cum ipsius rei necessitas efflagitare videtur, tum summa a majoribus prudentia constitutum est. At nudam προστασίαν, et quemcunque dignitatis locum, per se clara esse aut magnifica, aliudve amplius, quod vere sit venerabile, præter eorum qui ea sustinent virtutem, homines leviculi tantum opinantur. Hic pes figendus: tantum veræ laudis a magistratu adepto apud æquos rerum æstimatores reportabis, quantum virtutis et diligentiæ in illum attuleris. Proinde sordidam reddere, quam ambis dignitatem, suillinum est, ipsa vero ut te indignum evehat, fieri non potest. Cum vero apud nos præfecturæ gradus ea habent ex fundatorum munificentia annexa bona, quæ ignavorum etiam animos titillare, et sui desiderio rapere apta sint; quod vix ullos ad dignitatis fastigium evectos annumerat, nisi quos inter alios aliquo modo eminere ipsa invidia fatebitur, academiæ impense gratulandum est. Cladem autem, quam tanto orbata lumine horruit theologia, doctissimi successoris modestia,

eloquentia, candore, et doctrina propulsatam gaudet, prædicatque.

Variis interim hic vivitur moribus, quia maxima apud nos est ingeniorum varietas. Nonnulli, ventri penitus dediti atque somno, ætatem per inertiam et socordiam trahunt, suntque potius, quam vivunt; in re congerenda alii plus æquo sunt soliciti; aliarumque mixtarum artium non insolentes, habet, habuitque semper academia, quorum piget pudetque. Qui frigide, ideoque frustra ambierunt Musas, et repulsam passi vel penitus sordescunt, vel insaniunt, in corporis gaudiis pæne tandem evanuere. Ex scelerata vero paucorum licentia, et depravatis moribus, de ipsa pronunciare academia, illorum tantum est, qui vel assurgente aliorum virtute minores et invidi, vel cæco partium studio abrepti, de infamia nostra, quam de probitate sua, magis sunt soliciti. Cœnum, lutum, eluviem habent amœnissimæ urbes, nec quid aliud magis expositum, aut in oculos viatorum prius incurrit. At ineptus esset, qui omnem urbem, ubi lutum est, Lutetiam diceret. Nec candidiores, nec sanctiores animas magnam partem, quam nunc amplectitur, unquam aluit academia. Per diversoria, trivia, plateas, cœnopolia, ubi nonnullæ forsan occurrunt studiosorum larvæ, per triduum oberrantium hospitum censuris non stamus. Collegia, bibliothecas, musæa, scholas, oratoria, templa, typographias appellamus. Qui ex iis diligentiæ, pietatis, bonarum literarum, virtutum omnium nullum specimen, fructum nullum percipere potest, non tam male lippus est, aut in sole caligat, quam hostis ex professo, cujus de rebus nostris definire non est.

Quot vero hucusque habuit inimicos academia, tot habuit et triumphos: neque famam nostram vexarunt ulli sine certissimo suæ dispendio. Non autem Vulcanium scutum, non murum aliquem aheneum adepti, non amuletis nescio quibus instructi, sed puri æterni numinis favoris præsidiis septi, omnium propulsavimus injurias. Quoties nudi, egeni, ope omni humana destituti, petulantissimorum ingeniorum convitiis cruentati, in sinu summi optimi patris recumbentes, rei nostræ conficiendæ curam ei detulimus; toties non tantum securi e vadis emersimus, sed et victores omnia secunda et felicia sumus experti. Qui jacentes ad spem erexit, erectos summa spe explevit, beneficiis, honoribus auxit, cumulavit;

qui efflorescere, et nitorem hunc qualem qualem assequi dedit, ille mihi semper Deus erit.

Neque tamen adeo ingrati sumus, ut quæ eximie de nobis meruerunt optimi quique inter mortales literarum patroni, aut aspernari, aut oblivisci audeamus. Imo hinc memoriæ immortalis, et in omne ævum ab invidia oblivionis vindicandi decoris, qui beneficentia ulla academiam demereri statuerunt, sunt securi; quod cum iis, qui ingrati animi vitium et pestem non tantum penitus sciunt, sed æternum execrantur, rem se habere, facile intelligere possint.

Primo autem mihi celebratus ultima oratione, jam celebrandus hic venit summus sub Deo rerum nostrarum arbiter. Sed quid ego de tanto viro? Cum duæ artes sint, in quibus viri principes studium ponere debeant, militaris nempe et civilis, quibus omnis stat publica virtus, illeque communem hominum fortunam egressus esse merito æstimandus sit, qui alterutram feliciter, civium suorum bono administraverit; qui utramque vero mediocriter procuravit, vix celebretur; hic nostro saltem seculo solus est, qui tum hanc, tum illam ita expoliverit, ut quam maxime ornaverit haud facile sit definire; utrumque sane, supra quod dici potest, feliciter et processu usque ad invidiam fauste excoluerit.

> Res gerere, et captos ostendere civibus hostes,
> Attingit solium Jovis, et cælestia tentat:[b]

ut canit poeta. Atqui procul omni dubio in republica bene legitimeque administranda tanto major gloria est, ea quam splendidissimi effundunt triumphi, quanto ingenii bona, virtutes pacis, religionis honos, virium ostentationi, cædi, et sanguini antestant. Ille vero tantus ac talis, cæteris omnibus major, hoc solo seipso minor esse voluit, ut secundi ordinis titulum inter suos pergat numerare, quo lubens primitus susceptum nostri patrocinium feliciter usque propugnet. Nec satis habuit, nominis invicti umbra discrimen academiæ tot annos jam defendisse; sed insuper munificentia et largitione gratissima, celeberrimum toto orbe librorum thesaurum, grande illud non academiæ tantum, sed et gentis nostræ decus, bibliothecam Bodleianam auxit et locupletavit. Felicem Bodleii animam! quæ tot tantosque virtutis suæ æmulos, tum famæ auctores invenerit. Dum innumeros, qui id sibi negotii solum crediderunt dari, ut

[b] Hor. Ep. i. 17. 33.

laute baccharentur, nepotes longa nocte premit, æternumque pressura est oblivio; tu nominis tui gloriosam memoriam usque adeo propagasti, ut neque ulla annorum series, aut fuga temporum ei tenebras offundat. Felix Bodlei! non omnis morieris; dum reges, principes, victores, quidquid uspiam antiquæ virtutis, aut veræ eruditionis monumentum inveniri possit, in tuo sacrario reponere certatim gestiunt, suisque imaginibus penetralia tua decorare non dedignantur. Hic princeps, illic comes, inde præsul, longo demum ordine, variis honorum tabulis insigniti, viri laudatissimi fecerunt, ut jam totius orbis ore consono celebretur Bodleius. Adsit jam modo numen propitium, quin ad invidendos scientiarum et virtutis apices, summumque in orbe literario dignitatis fastigium ascendat academia, causa nulla est cur dubitemus.

Cum itaque per se, suos, aliosque ita cumulatissime nobis prospexit benignissimus pater, quid nos interea, academici? An per ignaviam et socordiam ætatem agere, genio, vitiis indulgere, torpescere, animo esse remisso, et suavia in præsentia quæ sunt, prima habere, deinde emori, priusquam quid sit vivere sciamus? Absit sane. Imo quicquid præclarum et egregium, quicquid apud mortales laude dignum haberi debet, illud omne a nobis jam meritissime expectari videtur. Nihil vulgare, nihil non summa pietate et diligentia excoctum, cum bonorum omnium vita, tum Dei immortalis beneficia efflagitant, quod invidis oculi doleant, quod horreat Roma, quod nolit impia turba, id simus, id assequi conemur. Vanam, nudam, sterilem religionis professionem, histrionico, cui renuntiavimus, numinis cultu nihilo meliorem, quantocius amoliamur. Nil viris gravibus, et scenæ servire nesciis, et qui in aliqua modestiæ fama esse velint, indignius, quam ex mera toga ambire laudem, et honorem crepantes, id omne, quod veræ laudis et honoris quasi palatium est, susque deque habere, persuasissimi simus. Intelligat denuo, quam cordatis omnibus et contemptui et ludibrio sit, proletaria ista togatorum turba. Non sumus ut olim in velabro olearii, ubi mutuam laudem malis moribus invicem præstare mos erat. In militiæ disciplinam adducimur, ubi cuique statio quam agit, pro virili tuenda est, aut deserenda turpiter. Præterierunt fatuorum halcyonia, neque superbire ex titulis, aut in imperitum vulgus ex ephippiis ferocire ultra licet. Unicum si excipias studium

partium, severe judicat, nec amplius hominum larvas miratur populus.

Macte ideo virtute vestra, doctores literatissimi, sacrum theologiæ depositum, veritatis κειμήλιον, religionis honorem, veræ sanctimoniæ laudem, doctrinæ famam, cuncta a plerisque deserta, nequiter et turpiter conculcata, tanquam Spartam vestram, quam cœpistis, ornare pergite. Sycophantarum latratibus, invidorum, et temporum mutationibus, exacerbatorum morsibus, hostium incursionibus, hactenus obstitit virtus vestra et industria. Candorem, numinis reverentiam et cultum, morum gravitatem, cæterasque animi et ingenii dotes, quas hucusque in vobis suspexerit academia, indies excolite magis, donec triumphata ignorantia, invidia, omnique detersa ærugine, tanquam in consummatissimum virtutum omnium emporium oculi animique, tum nostratium, tum exterorum in academia conversi sint. Quod a seculi peste et supplicio, errorum teterrimorum, qui ubique pæne grassantur, tabe et sanie integros et sanos custodivit filios alma mater, vestræ in concionando sedulitati, exhortando fervori, disputando qua opus est acumini, virtutem exemplo, sub clementissimi patris cura et tutela acceptum ferre se libenter testatur. Quamplurimi autem hic in theologia vere studiosi, sacri ministerii candidati, in hujus laudis partem assumi meritissime postulant. Hosce nempe vigore summo lacertos, olim ecclesiam et scholas, rostra et cathedras amplexuros monet academia. Quibus utrum modestiam, doctrinam, ingenii acumen, an animi submissionem magis gratuler, hæreo.

Vestro, doctores, eorumque in ære quantum sit respublica, nisi vos multo majori debitorum mole Christo et ecclesiæ devinctos esse haberem confitentes, in memoriam lubentissime revocarem. At Christi servis, cæli candidatis, utcunque inter mortales exceptis, tantis cum sint beneficiis pignerati, quibus in æternum non erunt solvendo, melior quam vobis sors contigerit haud expectanda, vix optanda videtur. Merces est obedientia nostra, et ipsum opus ministerii præmium satis amplum. Ne vos teneat philosophorum immensa laudum cupido, multo minus hodiernæ apud pontificios idolomaniæ illecebræ, venter et ambitio, aliave fugacis ævi blandimenta; quæ futura sunt, imo quæ bonis adsunt, divini amoris pignora attentius perpendite. Hæc animos in obse-

quium rapere, in officio peragendo vires renovare et augescere possunt, et factum dabunt.

Vosque, lectissima juvenum corona, academiæ, patriæ, ecclesiæ, non minor spes, quam illi gloria, quoniam vobis neque exempla, neque præcepta desunt, quibus ad proficiendum in omni virtutum genere incitari possitis, quæ a vobis merito sperantur, attendite. In specula sunt omnis ordinis homines : quemadmodum se unusquisque vestrum gerat, observant. Malorum interim et ignavorum corrumpendi artibus vos nimis esse opportunos, cogitate. Neque enim laus est, ibi esse probum, ubi nemo est, qui aut possit, aut conetur corrumpere. Fucos, quoad possumus, depellimus a præsepibus nostris : cæterum cordatis omnibus ignavorum exitu ad diligentiam acrior stimulus vix adhibetur. Qui stolidorum et improborum hominum catervas vagas et inutiles, extrema fere aut timentes, aut ferentes, vel flagitiis omnibus coopertas, sibi in œnopoliis, popinis, angulisque fædissimis et spurcissimis plaudentes, strenuis et sapientibus omnibus satis spretas et neglectas, contemplari velint, vix socordiam, tripudia, et choreas, quibus juventutis florem bonis artibus ereptum discant, imitabuntur.

Sed ulterius detinendi non estis, auditores. Ex invidorum oculis jam jam evanescentis magistratus nostri, cujus tamen adhuc neque piget neque pudet, vel acta referendo, vel confitendo omissa, ullamve reddendo rationem, invitis vobis, ipse non coactus, satietatem imponere nolo. Floreat academia, vigeat inter studiosos concordia, industria, religio, numinis reverentia, et insurgentis cujuscunque virtutis æmulatio ; exulent studia partium, cæcus sui amor, avaritia, ignavia, quæcunque ingenuos animos, generosa pectora, mentes Christianas minus decent; quod dispendio pacis, famæ, studiorum, vestris studiis obsequens, inserviens commodis, hucusque litavi, me mei haud pœnitebit.

Sed et adhuc lugendi jure donandi estis, academici ; neque enim hic gradum sistit fatum, aut dolor. Quale literarum decus, quod morum exemplar nuperrime nobis eripuit veneranda providentia, enarrare volentem cohibet mœrens animus, inclususque dolor. Illum, inquam, quem candor, et justitiæ soror, incorrupta fides, nudaque veritas, bonis omnibus charum; quem in rebus agendis prudentia et industria literatis utilem, omnibusque acceptum reddiderunt; quem

ipse amicum habui summa necessitudine conjunctissimum, pro dolor! amisimus. Nisi publica obstarent ecclesiæ fata, et effusus reclamaret martyrum sanguis, unde privato luctui indulgere vetat pietas et pudor, eruditi capitis desiderio modum ponere nimis esset difficile. Procuratorem summa bonorum omnium expectatione munus subeuntem, ereptum fato deflevit in vesperiis fraterna facundia. Sed, apage sis, inanes gemitus, et nequicquam ingeminata vota. An mortis nostræ tenebris, affectionum vitiis, studiorum involucris, laborum tædio, æmulorum odio, curarum anxietate, rerum omnium incertitudine et instabilitate æternum solutos, deplorandos censeamus? Absit, academici. Quæ nos urgent et premunt, quæ utrinque nos male habent, ex alto despiciunt felices animæ. Dum pietati, virtuti, laboribus, quod reliquum est perbrevis ævi, dicamus, magnis exemplis aliquo modo digna molimur; Deo curæ erit nostri rerumque omnium exitus.

ORATIO IV.[a]

Ea est muneris nostri ratio, academici, ut cum deliciarum omne genus satias tenuerit auditores, in ipsa dimissione, cui jam inhiat erudita cavea, paulisper a me detinendi sitis. Elatos spe secessus, et ad censuram peragendam gestientes animos, cum nostrorum hominum, tum hospitum gratissimorum videre videor. Quid cuique sapuit, quid nauseam peperit, ut quisque nostrum vel cordate, vel saltem minus inepte partes suas egerit, prout feret sors aut occasio, iis, qui semper auditores vexatos esse dedignantur, lubido est exponere. Usque enim adeo in locum præcipitem hic nos committimus, ut æquis atque iniquis pariter nostri potestatem faciamus. Ea enim sub lege et conditione, illiberali satis, rem hisce comitiis literariam gerimus, ut quæ nos pro more et honore academiæ, atque officio quod nobis incumbit, præstare conemur, mox fabula fiant, atque per ora vulgi traducta cachinni sæpius censura excipiantur. Neque enim ullo consilio regi potest mos iste pessimus, qui in se neque consi-

[a] In comitiis academicis habita est hæc oratio, anno 1657, cum jam continua serie quintum fueras procancellarius.

lium, neque modum habet. Ita voluerunt, ita jusserunt antecessores, quorum hic solum auctoritate nitimur, et imperium ferimus, ut profana, sacra; levia, seria; procacia, atque rerum gravissima uno nisu effunderet ingenio varia, atque animo dispar soboles academica. Sed nequicquam coit male sarta gratia. Optima quæque statim signa relinquere, et oblivione sibi consulere, coguntur. Ita enim quæ suavia sunt in præsentia, quamvis ægritudinem mox conciliatura, prima habet juvenilis studiosorum fervor; et vix aliquem ipsa virtus, aut eruditio, locum tutari possit, ita tumultuantur, clamant, pugnant concalescens turba, de iis quibus nihil opus est ut audiantur, ut obliviscantur plurimum. Pudet dicere, qua celebritate, si modo celebre id dici possit, quod dictu turpe est, ubivis volitant sarcasmorum et dicteriorum ineptiæ, cum rerum vere memorabilum ipsa vestigia obterit oblivio, et æterno premuntur silentio. Neque sane iniquius ulla concertatio comparari potest, quam ut medios inter tumultus et strepitus, dum γελόιων avidus insurgit loci temporisque genius, cum lepore et facetiis contenderent virtus et eloquium. Imo quia urit, quia secat, liceat, auditores, inveterato huic atque adhuc gliscenti hujus loci dieique malo paulo altius ingemiscere. Atque hoc libentius agam, quoniam quicquid sit illud doloris, aut bilis, quod cuiquam indignabunda conciliare possit oratio ῥήμασι βυσσίνοις lenire, atque iis quæ magis ad palatum sapiunt, veluti condire, priusquam ad finem vergat, animus est. Præterita recordanti subit istorum temporum miseratio, quibus, quo quis ad bonis inhumane conviciandum accesserit audacior, quo ad modestiæ limites transiliendos alacrior, eo magis famæ et gloriæ se reportaturum speraverit. Manserunt etiam hisce comitiis, morientis uti speramus, licentiæ vestigia. Sed graviora tulimus: neque enim unquam celeberrimum hunc conventum ad finem perducere potuimus, quin vel oratorum alicui silentium imponere, vel quod multo gravius est, contumelias pati, necesse habuimus. Delicatis ingeniis, si quæ sint, age, evellantur vitiorum fibræ.

Est etiam unde sororiæ academiæ vel curam et diligentiam desiderare, vel vices dolere cogimur; nempe quod impuros nebulones, moriones eruditos, non tantum alios, quos non nisi Aristophanis æmulis in scenam producere fas esset, dicteriis petulantissime agitare; sed et quia magis aperte

dicendum est, mendaciis atque calumniis in innocentium hominum famam involare, vel volens permisit, vel invita est perpessa.

Satis diu jam, ni fallor, serram hanc invicem se proscindendi convitiis reciprocavit utriusque academiæ proles; neque enim dentatas istius hominum generis, quod quid sit pudere nescit, quas vocant, facetias, aliter dici posse, aut debere censeo. Contendimus utique quis jocose magis, aut magis salse, si modo consuetudini insulsissimæ quid salis inesse dicendum sit, alios populo deridendos præbeat. Putidum certamen, et personatis indignum histrionibus. Veterem comœdiam, γελατοποῖον, cordatorum hominum famæ dicaciter insultantem, uti obtrivit Macedonum contumeliarum impatiens potentia; ita ubivis fastidivit, contempsit, explosit tandem ethnicismus. Eam jam deperimus scilicet, et vulgari scena ejectam, postiliminio in academiarum comitia reducere satagimus. Egregiam vero laudem! mimas, histriones, balatrones publicos, evax, tandem pæne prævertimus! Et enim dum huic sententiæ, seu insaniæ potius non renuntiamus, dum istiusmodi nos agitant intemperiæ, si quis mox ganeonibus per popinas, tabernas, lustra, decantanda deprompserit, ille sapit solus, reliqui volitant velut umbra. Utinam sane tandem per eos, quorum honori parco (ut neminem enim ostenderet oratio nostra, nisi qui se ita voluntarius obtulerit, ut in eum non incurrere non possim, statui) utinam, inquam, liceret inveteratæ huic consuetudini obviam ire; utinam juventuti academicæ liceret esse piæ, sobriæ, modestæ; et ne, qui sunt ex malorum morum quasi colluvione nati, bipedum, imo, quod sæpius accidit, quadrupedum impudentissimi, in ullo pretio apud nos diutius esse viderentur.

Harum vero ineptiarum non ita pridem pertæsus, ausus est non nemo, qua erat inscitia, ordinem hunc rerum nostrarum, quem semper vetitum, condemnatum semper, semperque retentum videret, convellere. Voluit nempe ut a comitiis academicis, gravissimorum virorum frequentissimo undique concursu celeberrimis, exularent scommata, dicteria, mendacia; ut in omni doctrinæ genere exercitiorum atque disputationum uberiorem haberemus proventum; convitiorum, maledictorum, ineptissimorum jocorum famem; ut inertium hominum et helluonum, qui nihil aliud norunt, nisi vivere per dedecus, et præ risu quotidie emori, qui solennibus nostris

se affatim ingeruht, nulla ratio in posterum haberetur. Criminis vero hujus inauditi, audaciæ, furoris, sceleris auctorem velitis, ut ei in oculos involetis, aut saltem ejus in famam? Atqui eccum ipsum:

> Me, me, adsum, qui feci, in me convertite ferrum,
> O juvenes, mea fraus omnis.[b]

Imo quæ et quanta jamdudum ab hominibus odio, amore, studio partium incitatis, aliisque, qui nihil otiosa vita, plena et conferta voluptatibus, præstabilius esse ducunt, ob ipsam hanc causam, quodque in ipsorum verba, antiquas quod attinet ineptias, jurare ausus non sum, sim perpessus, quidque rumoribus super hac re ubivis inique sit dispersum, hominem neminem arbitror esse, qui ignorat. Neque sane conatus istiusmodi destinans mea me fefellit expectatio. Etenim an ego ea, quibus hac rerum conditione invigilaveram, ut vulgo cum candore exciperentur, vel senserim, vel speraverim? Non tam eram rudis, non tam ignarus rerum, tam omnis, Deo gratias, prudentiæ expers, ut animum meum lactando in vanam spem illicerem. Aliquid vidi, aliquid audivi, aliquid legendo et quærendo cognovi; contra inveterata præjudicia bono publico invigilantem, nisi convitiorum plaustris onustum, et tantum non oppressum, inveni neminem. Neque hæc ideo a me dicuntur, quasi ex obscurorum quorundam hominum et nugacissimorum ineptiis et stultitia, aliorumve ingrata credulitate aut invidia, anxietatem exhaurirem; cum non tantum conscientia propria, sed et studiorum et factorum apud eruditos, et malarum artium insolentes, saltem venia, dicteriorum scenæ ac vulgi conviciorum sim securus.

Sin autem acrius hic egi, quam mea fert consuetudo, aut ratio vitæ, qua omnibus morem gerere, omnes perferre et pati, quoad fieri potest, in animum induxi; peto a vobis, academici, ut tantum orationi meæ concedatis, quantum justæ indignationi, si modo indignationem parerent convitia et contumeliæ, concedendum putetis. Usque vero, per me licet, fruantur in posterum maledicendi voluptate, qui nec recta sibi consulere, nec bene consultis uti norunt. Quantas itaque turbas, quos clamores, in rejiciendis nugis, quisquiliis, eruditionis vero et scientiarum omne genus exercitiis inducendis, stabiliendis, excitaverit, quos provocaverit nonnullorum industria, de qua quicquid dixerim, minus esset, ne invidia et partium furore

[b] Virg. Æn. ix. 427.

perciti literiones aliqui nimium contabescerent, ulterius non prosequar. Optimi autem conatus atque pulcherrimi conscientia recti, ea in præsentia voluisse, quibus posteri si qui sint fruentur, sat habeant, quibus curæ et cordi est aut purioris religionis honos, aut severioris eruditionis et scientiarum progressus: alienæ virtuti invideant necesse est, qui propriam non habent.

Quoniam vero ex iis, quæ non fecit, calumniarum satis tulerit academia; videamus porro, num ex iis, quæ fecit, gloriam ullam aut laudam apud æquos rerum æstimatores sit adepta. Annus jam decimus agitur, ex quo communi patriæ incendio erepta academia, et securius altiusque radices egerit, et liberius progerminare cœperit. Quibus vero rerum adversarum anfractibus involuta, quibus impedita molestiis atque periculis, exposita, *occulto velut arbor ævo*, hucusque succreverit, et sæpius antehac exposui, neque amplius in memoriam revocare opus est. Non defuisse, qui a gentis togatæ, extremum pæne discrimen sæpius adeuntis, partibus steterint, frequentissima, quam hodierno die conspeximus, studiosorum concio testimonio esse potest. Quid enim? an privatorum copia erat hostium præpotentium ferociæ, avaritiæ, audaciæ modum ponere? vel minas intonantibus, et verborum fulmina, frena injicere? Imo qui nihil divinum, nihil ope mortali grandius in declinantis rei literariæ subsidium et fulcimentum venisse sentit; illum rerum divinarum et humanarum pariter socordia, et negligentia supina labore certum est. Si quid autem vel a nostrum quopiam prudenter et consulte est susceptum, vel duce et auspice Christo perfectum feliciter, quo academiarum aut saluti, aut honori, aut commodis consultum fuerit; id sane sine summo seculi dedecore, quemcunque tandem vultum aut supercilium induerint calumniatores, ei vitio verti non potest. Quo vero quisque vir melior est, eo libentius laude atque fama caret, factorum sensu atque conscientia contentus. Neque ii solum forsan academici dicendi sunt, qui cum illis alibi nihil opus esset, intra muros academicos se tuto retinuerint; ipsius autem academiæ aut incolumitatem propugnare, aut honore augere, nec velint, nec valeant. Ita demum optime præesse videantur ergastularii. Sed et præsto nobis fuere potentiorum subsidia, quæ grato animo semper recolimus, et quorum virtuti et favori optima quæque accepta ferimus. Eorum vero, cum re-

rum gestarum gloria immortalitati consecrantur, in laudes spatiari, aut recensere beneficia, temporis cancelli, quibus arctamur, nos prohibent. Providentiæ interea et bonitatis divinæ gloriam, in amplissimis quos ex iis intra breve tempus fructibus percepimus, lubet contemplari.

Quæ anno abhinc decimo, aut eo plus minus, pæne deserta jacuit academia, quos jam propitii in Christo numinis favore freta, atque irrigata cælitus, doctissimos oratores, subtiles philosophos, disceptatores acerrimos, egregios mathematicos, pios, acres, vehementes verbi divini præcones, felices criticos e grege suo in gremium ab ipsa pueritia exceptos, fotos, educatos, ostendere non possit? Quos ego hic nunc prius laudem? vos doctores, aliosque collegiorum et aularum præfectos, eruditos, pios, qui recta consilia, egregia exempla dedistis: an juventutem ipsam, quæ vestris vestigiis inhærere, consiliis obtemperare voluit? Si ea demum sit civitatis cujuscunque ultima calamitas, atque hinc solum misera esse videatur, cum neque qui prudenter reipublicæ consulere possint, neque qui recte cogitatis acquiescere velint, in ea sint; quidni ea felix dicenda sit, ubi multi bene præcipiunt, atque plurimi sunt, qui cordate obtemperant? Uti enim vim atque virtutem ductorum sensim debilitat, atque animis languorem incutit, discipulorum segnities aut pervicacia; ita juniorum industriæ necesse est ut iter intercludatur, ubi nemo est, qui cohortatione sua et exemplo animum iis accendat. Quid autem jam possit vita in literis posita, exemplis atque præceptis instituta et munita, quasi in speculo conspiciendum præbet academia. Quod gaudeant boni, quod invidis oculi doleant, quod suo splendore aliis caliginem inducat; ejus jam unice desiderio per aliquot annos flagrarunt literarum et disciplinæ nostræ alumni; imo eo usque progressi sunt eorum nonnulli, ut quemadmodum apud antecessores non habuerint exempla, ita an apud posteros inventuri sint æmulos, vereor. Quid ego singulos commemorem? theologos, ὀρθοδοξίας retinentissimos, quibus scilicet antiquius fuerit veritati divinæ, ea, qua decet, animi submissione inservire, quam pravarum opinionum portentis, aut veterum philosophorum quisquiliis, inauspicato denuo erutis, nominis celebritatem aliquam assequi, atque enitescere? Atque utinam sane tam libenter aliqui nobilitate nominis quali quali carere potuissent, quam ecclesia aut pii omnes

eorum lucubrationibus carere possent. Sed postquam famæ libido quenquam invaserit, neque eam explendi nisi veritatis periculo spes ulla est, omnem per errorum anfractus vagandi licentiam præfidenter sibi sumit, atque mori mavult, quam non per fas aut nefas eminere. Quid egregios mathematicos, quibus, cum neque a priscis feliciter inventa accurate docere, neque aliorum inventis addere, satis fuerit, ipsi etiam communem virorum doctorum sortem prætergressi, nova, mira, stupenda, ex intimis naturæ rerum penetralibus eruta, ignota priscis, admiranda posteris, non sine tum ipsorum, tum academiæ laude et fama, tam dilucide et ornate in lucem eruditorum extraxerunt, ut, ea studia quod attinet, quicquid uspiam est doctiorum et candidiorum animarum, iis ultro palmam deferre paratum sit? Alios lubentissime adorea afficerem, nisi me, qui in hoc dicendi genere neque promptus sum, neque paratus, laudandorum multitudo, et meritorum splendor ac decus obruerit. Imo intelligo quam scrupuloso difficilique in loco versor, quam invidiæ atque obtrectationibus opportuno; dum aliquibus laudationum nihil satis est, aliis quicquid nonnihil est nimium. Aliquorum ideo cedamus modestiæ, aliorum audaciæ; parcamus personis, res ipsæ recenseantur. Igitur magnum quid aggredior, quod cum omnes pæne ævo seculi graves simus, atque sub ipsius mundi mortalitate gemat humanum genus, licentia et intemperantia ubivis fere dominantibus, academicorum mores non vereor commemorare. Præceps sane et perversum malevolorum judicium, quinquatribus Palladis, aut Musarum hisce feriis innixum, dum advenarum turbæ mista paulo licentius vagatur juventus academica, declinare cogimur. Si quid hic secius quam oportet accidere videatur, in eos cudatur faba, qui ne interciderentur peccandi lenocinia et occasiones, summa ope nisi sunt; quæ nunc extra septa hæc publicitus aguntur, ego vix ea nostra voco: pacata tempora studiorum atque studiosorum recessus appellamus, nisi illic plurimos optimarum legum vigorem ingenuis moribus exprimentes; paucos tantum ad præscriptum honestos et sobrios; quisquilias, nebulones, sceleribus inquinatos, nisi aut nullos, aut paucissimos, inveniet æquus rerum arbiter, causam non dicimus, quin summa infamia flagremus. Age, hic in jus ambulemus. Diem nobis dicat, cuicunque vel ex ira, vel ex invidia volupe est. Pro tribunali nos lubentisme sistimus. In novum discrimen adducimur. Non feci-

mus, non cogitavimus, falsi testes, ficta crimina: quæ voces ad judices dici solent, adhibemus. Hic serio triumphamus; hic habent, quod gratiæ imputent divinæ grati animi; neque hoc opis est nostræ.

Neque multorum in academia, aut ipsius academiæ erga exteros, religionis ergo, et bonarum literarum gratia peregrinantes, pietatem oblivione sepelire fas esse judicamus. Quot vero egregios juvenes, multarum ecclesiarum spem atque segetem, quinquennio jam proxime elapso sustinuit, aluit, fovit quorundam liberalitas, consultius silere puto, quam leviculam arrogantiæ suspicionem apud quemvis mortalium dicendo subire. Verbo dicam: non tantum ἀδάπανος nobis bibliothecarum usus, ac mortuorum indulgentia eos excepit (quis enim non esset sine sumptibus liberalis, sine dispendio munificus? si modo hoc esset liberalem esse et munificum) sed in dimensorum consortium, in aularum instructum cautione divina secura pietas eos admisit. Neque tamen in hac re aliquid reperio, quamobrem laudaremur. Officium nostrum fecimus, atque utinam fecerimus. Eorum, quæ fidei nostræ concredidit antiquorum munificentia, non proprietarios, non ex asse heredes, sed condos promos fidos et frugi, qua ex illorum liberalitate quam plurimorum bonorum inopiæ ac rebus angustis subveniretur, nos esse voluerunt. Cum itaque cumulatissime nobis prospexerit divina providentia, an nobis vivere, genio indulgere, ætatem voluptatibus agere, licebit, neglectis, spretis iis, quibus cum sit res angusta domi, tamen ingenii cultus gratia, quo nihil melius, neque amplius in natura mortalium est, per infinita rerum discrimina e regionibus remotissimis in celeberrimum hoc literarum emporium tendunt? Absit, academici, imo nihil Christianis, nihil pietatis et purioris religionis cultoribus, nihil viris doctis, nihil aliorum munificentiæ alumnis indignius, quam deo Lucrio inhiare, aut eo frui, quod revera est alienum, nimium esse tenacibus. Verum enimvero quicquid nos peregrinorum causa fecimus, id maxime nostra etiam causa fecisse videri possumus. Cum enim vita plerumque sint innocentes, proposito sancti, insolentes malarum artium, pietatis, industriæ, diligentiæ, ac grati animi egregia specimina inter nos ediderunt. Hinc etiam per exteras oras latius diffusa effulgent academiæ decus et honor. Hinc laudem suam a malevolorum et invidorum hominum calumniis prorsus vindicavit; ut fugitivis, atque ob scelera fu-

gatis, qui infeste nobis adversantur, et os ferreum perfricantes ubivis in academiam invehunt, vix auris, nedum fides apud probos, et partium studiis vacuos, uspiam adhibeatur. Omnium jam libris et linguis prædicatur Oxonium, ita ut postquam deleverit adversariorum convitia, atque de invidorum calumniis triumphum egerit, ne celebritati suæ minor cedat, jam solum in votis habeat.

Non defuere interea, quibus vel propria malitia ductis, vel aliorum libidini morem gerentibus, dum quam ipsi meruere, pœnas dederunt, non sine summa infamia, nec minore scelere, volupe fuerit non tantum tranquillam academiæ conditionem solicitare, sugillare gloriam, antiquos ritus evertere, sed et colubrinis molaribus ipsam matrem depascere, atque illotis pedibus conculcare. Manent adhuc ubivis, et sunt superstites Cuthæorum posteri, qui dum votis fruitur felicibus academia, se genuinam ejus esse prolem plenis buccinis crepant; at ubi in arctum coguntur gentis togatæ copiæ, atque urgentur angustiis, animo statim gladiatorio ad eam viam affectant, et una cum iis, qui novercali odio prosequuntur literatos, devorata, quam prius simulabant, modestia, palam congrediuntur; quippe qui id solum in votis habere videantur, ne non nostris periculis delectentur malevoli, ipsi opimæ invidiæ et odii victimæ. Hos consulunt in tenebris, hos publice adsciscunt patronos, contumaces academiæ alumni, dum grandævam matrem, longo retro tempore summæ libertatis jure gaudentem, extraneum ferre imperium, atque æmulorum sub ditione captivam detinere, volunt. Si ex horum hominum votis cecidisset eventus, si ex animi sententia nacti fuissent calumniatores successum, nisi multi una Flaminii clamassent, ἐλευθέρα ἔστω Ἑλλὰς, neque suo jure, neque favore principum, neque antecessorum industria aut virtute, neque antiqua disciplina ulterius fruitura esset academia. Et sane usque adeo hostium extraneorum sustulimus impetum, arma retudimus, tot reipublicæ μεταμορφώσεις superavimus, et tot publicis enatavimus periculis; ut non nisi a domesticis, a nostratibus, si qui tandem futuri sint, qui ad perdendam rem literariam sobrie sunt accessuri, nobis cavendum sit. Sed nolo Babylonios tentare modos:

> Prudens futuri temporis exitum
> Caliginosa nocte premit Deus.
>
> *Hor. Carm.* iii. 29, 29.

Quænam autem negotiorum moles nostrorum nonnullis incubuit, dum consiliis aliquorum pravis et præcipitibus mederi, adversari aliorum nequitiæ, obviamque ire, periculis undique ingruentibus, necesse habuerunt, cum in summa rerum omnium discrimina inciderimus, qui negotio huic nostro in posterum sunt præficiendi, dicent. Sine causa ideo, at forsan non sine culpa, ut non tantum qua elegantia, sed et quo lepore, quibusque facetiis essent præditi ostenderent, id maxime nobis vitio vertere quidam voluerunt, sine quo neque ipsi tuti, neque nos probi et honesti esse potuimus.

Sed ut modum tandem orationi constituamus, necesse est. Hucusque ideo, auditores, ope divina freti, non tantum ex periculis evasimus, sed infestissimos quosque hostes vicimus; saltem victi, prostrati, loco pulsi non sumus. Vicit pietas, ingenuus candor, morum integritas, atque omnia recta tentandi audax industria, neque sub jugum nos misit utcunque corrupti seculi genius. Numerosam fama et celebritas, bene moratam disciplina, doctam industria peperit almæ matris sobolem. Quam concepit in re religionis sententiarum divortium, fovit studium partium, incendit ira et vindicta, gravem et pæne insuperabilem usque adhuc pertulimus invidiam; neque tamen adeo abjecto sumus animo, aut demisso, ut non eadem quæ prius, imo majora tentare spes sit, et votum. Adsis modo propitius tu, Pater optime, laborum omnium nostrorum auctor atque præmium, sit tibi curæ atque cordi pusilli gregis incolumitas; tuque, Jesu Christe, tuorum omnium perfugium atque salus; tuque etiam sanctissime, atque infinite potens, beate Spiritus, erige virtute tua ineffabili ad omnem pietatem et industriam academicorum omnium animos. Ita demum ea seges, quæ adhuc pæne in herba latet, et votis et expectationi bonorum omnium amplissime respondebit: quod faxis pro infinita tua gratia, Domine Jesu. Amen.[d]

[d] Ne quis in celeberr. Oxoniensis academiæ institutis minus versatus orationis hujus argumenti similitudinem cum ea duarum proxime præcedentium, in occasione haud dissimili, vitio vertat, rei istius causam ex Parecbolis Statutorum percipiat, quarum Tit. vii. sect. 1. § 18. cui inscriptio est, 'De conclusione comitiorum,' hic adscripsimus: Peractis exercitiis, et doctoribus in qualibet facultate creatis, consuevit vicecancellarius, monitu procuratorum, comitia concludere solenni oratione; in qua res gesta superioris anni, beneficia præsertim universitati collata, et alia, quæ ad honorem academiæ faciunt, prout ipsi videbitur, commemorare in more positum est.

ORATIO V.[a]

Quod semper in votis habui, academici, ut quamvis indignissimus, non tamen ultimus audirem academiæ procancellarius; cum id mihi hujus diei felicitas propediem expediet, venerando huic senatui, totique academiæ non possum non impense gratulari. Et quidni sane tot procellis agitato, tot negotiorum fluctibus pæne obruto, tot undique contrariis ventorum ictibus oppugnato, in portum jam tandem naviganti sibi etiam gratulari liceat? Etenim quorum præsagitione quadam, studiis depulsus, laborum atque itinerum tædio contritus, rerumque alienarum satur, succumbentem animum toties refeci, otium et quietem tantum non assecutus esse videor. Quanti autem mihi fuerit fasces deponere academicos, quam immani ambitione id dudum sum conatus, qua tandem maximorum virorum sententiam pæne inverecundia expugnavi, neque vestra nosse interest, neque mea repetere refert. Quod ideo non ante decursum totum quinquennium illuxerit vobis mihique dies hic expectatissimus, e rerum est quam patimur conditione. Sidera supremo motori proxime remota, eoque alterius seu arbitrio, seu necessitate rapidissime agitata, progressus suapte natura lentissimos, sed placidos, et ab inferiorum turba securos, sortita esse accepimus. Ex quo supremo gentis nostræ motori propius accesserit academia, utut raptu rerum omninum cælesti, quo populus agitamur suo orbe placidissime secura velocius circumvolvatur; motu tamen sibi peculiari et proprio ut lente procederet, necesse habuit. Superato itaque tandem, quamvis in longum producto discrimine, sedes ubi fata quietas ostendunt, lubens desideo. Nec hinc solum, quod evasi, gloriari licet, cum et hoc nonnihil, imo magnum sit; sed rate licet quassata, quod nec naufragus, nec prædonum licentiæ expositus, ad littus appello. En navem vestram academiam fluctibus plusquam decumanis jactatam, sospitem tamen et illæsam, etiam quod fidem pæne omnem superat, fortius so-

[a] Habita est hæc oratio ad academicos, anno 1657, quum, alio procancellario electo, munus illud jam depositurus fuit.

lito juncturis omnibus compactam, dum tonat lævum, atque malacia est, periti naucleri curæ illico committendam. Hoc tantum mihi restat, ut composite moriar. Salva res est, salva academia, salvæ literæ; sit salva pietas, et jam mori lubet. Moriar itaque, academici, idque ne morerer, officio pæne simul, et fato functus. Eruditos vero gemitus, aut doctos morientis singultus nolite expectare. Qui conscientia niti vivus didicit, elegantia moribundus haud opus habet.

Neque magistratum nostrum celebraturus adsum, quem tamen æque suscepisse pudet, ac jam deposuisse dolet; a quo utroque tantum absum, ut ab omni indecoro aut inhonesto longius abesse nollem. Verum enimvero nisi paulo iniquius comparatum esse existimassem, ut qui magistratum deponerent, suarum laudum essent præcones, et res suas gestas aliorumque vitia narrarent, nonnulla forsan, eaque nec penitus in gloria, quæ primus, quæ solus in magistratu gessi, celebrare possem. Sed non tantum ab ea consuetudine longissime abhorret ratio, atque voluntas nostra; sed ut inde divortant eorum omnium mores, quibus cordi est magna vivere potius quam loqui, et cuicunque tandem benefacere, quam a pluribus laudari, necesse est. Munus autem, quod honoris loco (quem a votis, quam a meritis, si fieri possit, longius abesse vellem) non accepi, haud laborum tædio contritus abdico. Et suscepti, et continuati, et jam tandem depositi ratio ad vestra commoda referebatur. Quia me aliquo modo rebus vestris subsidio, vel adjumento esse potuisse judicarunt alii, magistratum inivi; quia commodiori homine ac peritiori meo judicio vobis opus est, illo libenter abeo. Et jam serena mente privatus fio, neque ab ira eorum, quos sciens volensque injuria affeci, metuens; neque gratias eorum, quos demereri statui, expectans: nam prioris ordinis nullos plane esse audacter pronuntio; posterioris aliquos fuisse, meminisse me haud decet.

De rebus autem vestris, quæ pro more dicenda habeo, paucis accipite. Annus jam quintus esse desiit, ex quo academiæ moderamen, indigno licet, mihi commissum fuit. Quis fuerit eo temporis atque abinde gentis togatæ status, quæ rerum nostrarum conditio, nemo homo est nostratium, ut opinor, qui ignoret. Per primum biennium vulgi fuimus et vulgaris fabula. De discrimine nostro fortunisque commu-

nibus ex astrologorum hemerologiis et chartis Mercurialibus disceptatum est inter lippos et tonsores. Neque quisquam hominum erat adeo infeliciter stupidus, ut de fatis nostris aut timere, aut sperare ei non contigerit. Nempe sic voluit summus rerum arbiter, quo minoris pretii apud mortales esset quicquid est mortale: neque imperiorum venustatem, et summa totius mundi decora invadente marcore, ut florem illibatam sola gereret academia, forsan æquum erat. Causam interea nostram, cui vel periculum facessere nefas erat, aleæ subjectam ancipiti, qui pro virili propugnare ausi sunt, oppido fuere pauci. Imo eo deventum erat dementiæ, ut e partibus gentis togatæ stetisse, violatæ religionis et pietatis nomine censeretur. Omne autem illud, quod apud viros graves male audit, atque est vere flagitiosum, perquam liberaliter quotidie in vos impegere malevoli. Qui in rem nostram paulo æquius essent animati, ita tamen rerum suarum sategerunt, ut precibus obtusi, et quotidianis pæne convitiis fatigati, nihil aliud quam verba dare, moras nectere, et quæ pie de conclamatis dici solent, proferre sustinuerint. Rebus itaque omnibus turbatis, et inter sacrum et saxum positis, ope omni humana destitutis, non ἀπὸ μηχανῆς miraculum, sed cælitus prospexit pater clementissimus; postquam quo tandem evaderent audacia, rabies, et ignorantia nonnullorum, a quibus meliora expectare fas erat, liquido nimis constitisset, omnia eorum consilia, conatus omnes dicto citius ita dissipavit summus ille rerum omnium arbiter, ut rebus suis vix, aut ægre consulerent, qui nudiustertius nostris avidissime inhiabant. Præter ingens dedecus, et in omne ævum duraturam insaniam pravi illius incepti adversus academias, quod irato prorsus aversoque Deo nequicquam inierunt malesani homunciones, nihil prorsus reliquum est. Quamdiu autem erunt, qui oratione fusa facta et consulta fortium et sapientum cum improborum ignominia sempiternis monumentis prodere possint, conatus illius eos forsan pœnitebit. Atque hic finis fuit, hunc terminum obtinuit prima magistratus nostri solennior periodus.

Vos autem, academici,

> Cyclopea saxa
> Experti revocate animos, mœstumque timorem
> Mittite: forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.[b]

Nonnullorum forsan, dum ex scrupulis, quos nobis injecerunt

[b] Virg. Æn. i. 205.

malevoli, animi dubii fuimus, ea ratio, qua par erat uti, habita non fuit. Sed ut eorum, quæ non jussi fecimus; sic etiam illorum, quæ ob culpam alienam omittere non potuimus, accuratam reddere rationem nullo jure tenemur. Qui curis æger, pluribusque diversi generis negotiis intentus, omnia non tantum curat, et disponit sapienter, sed et feliciter perficit, is mihi communem mortalium sortem excedere videtur; quod de meipso sentire esset impium, prædicare inverecundum. Si genio indulgens, si socordia torpescens, si in re conquirenda solicitus, si ævi illecebris astrictus, malisve artibus quibuscunque tandem addictus, in rem vestram peccavi, quin summo dedecore e gremio matris ejiciar in æternum, causam non dico. Imo illum, qui ut exercitia pietatis, et in omni genere artium et scientiarum antiquitus prudenter instituta rite et sedulo peragerentur curavit; qui in utroque genere nova aliqua ad summam omnium utilitatem, et non levem academiæ laudem, ut instituerentur auctor fuit; qui nulli sumptui, nullis laboribus, quibus res literaria vel sufflaminari depressa, vel aliunde adjuta promoveri potuerit, parcendum statuit; vestro fretum genio et fato, quod ultra etiam bonorum omnium calculis approbaretur, saltem aggredi voluisse, non difficilis est conjectura. Sed verbo dicam: more plane divino evenit, ut salutem omnem, laudabilemque omnem progressum soli Deo accepta referremus. Illum rerum nostrarum conficiendarum in se curam suscepisse vel cæci conspiciant. Quoniam vero grates persolvere dignas non opis est nostræ, ne mortalium ingratissimi habeamur, utinam saltem tandem aliquando, quibus sumus pignorati beneficiis, supra cæteros mortales serio perpenderemus. Heu! pudet, quoties mores nostros, imo multorum ignaviam, superbiam, vanitatem, et proterviam, etiam nonnullorum erubescenda crimina ad calculos revoco. Hæccine, inquam, fieri flagitia? Hi mores nos decent? hæc studia? Ubi pudor? ubi pietas? Unde grati animi indicia accersam? Ingenue agam, metuo aliquoties ut apud nos substet divina præsentia. Expergiscimini tandem, quibuscunque aut Dei gloria, aut pietatis honos, aut literarum salus cordi est. Expergiscimini, inquam, et alium nacti coryphæum, ne beneficiis cælitus onusta, vitiis obruta pereat academia, defigite industriam. Non ego jam animos verborum lenociniis lactare, aut dicendi faces admovere contendo: nugæ et Siculæ gerræ.

Dei causam ago, licet indignissimus : sarta tecta maneat altissimi gloria : ne erga εὐεργέτην optimum maximum insolescat eruditorum natio, quæ apud facundiæ ædituos inter prima ponuntur, susque deque habenda duxi. Liceret ideo alta voce almæ matris fortunæ ingemiscere; nisi juniorum quorundam indomitam stultitiam, socordiam, et superbiam, imo magistrorum nonnullorum deplorandum religionis contemptum et pervicaciam, aliorum in cælestibus cæcitatem et ignorantiem referre puderet. Nam quæ plorare jubet pietas, dicere vetat pudor et verecundia. Neque sane usque adeo mentis oculos perstrinxit dolor, aut indignatio, quin plurimos omni virtutum genere excultissimos et quotidie videre, et sine fine laudare possem. Habet, Deo gratias, academia, qui inter literatos primas obtinent, quorum illibata pietas laudis nostræ beneficio haudquaquam indiget; sed nisi coram, et in os amicos celebrare moribus nostris nimis esset absonum, celeberrimos doctissimosque viros pæne innumeros adorea lubentissime afficerem. Nollem autem silentiam nostrum illorum laudibus et honori fraudi esse, qui in sustinendis academiæ negotiis, propulsandis periculis, in bene legitimeque ejusdem regimine promovendo, enixiorum posuerunt operam. Me quod attinet, qui sine illorum ope aut consilio oneri imposito penitus impar fuissem, imo nullus, immortales una omnibus gratias habeo, et quæcunque vel strenue vel prudenter malarum artium insolentibus gessisse videar, iis omnia lubentissime meritoque accepta fero.

Nec sine grata memoria memorandi sunt, quos per decursum jam magistratus studium συνέργους habui procuratorum nonnullos. Imo ausim spondere, quod ad referendas gratias, quantum quantum in me est, neminem promptiorem vel paratiorem aut offenderint, aut forsan sint inventuri. Ipse vero, quæ a quibusdam invidia et livore percitis, aliisque studio partium abreptis, simultatem mecum ultro ambientibus, indigna passus sum, conquererer; nisi dignitatem illam, quam propter contabuerunt, depositurus ansam omnem contendendi et obloquendi iis præripere statuissem. Id tamen dicam, quia dicendum est, nisi animo, uti spero, Christiano nonnulla dissimulare decrevissem, quæ merito egregie et palam contemnere, etiam ulcisci potui, eorumque injuriis et contumeliis tenebras dare, quorum amicitia mihi nihil unquam opus fuit, non adeo forsan pacem et com-

mune otium alia meriti colerent. Favete linguis, academici: quod nonnulli dominium indigitarunt, ego duram servitutem, et periculosæ opus plenum aleæ et expectavi, et sum expertus; ut nisi vestro candore, fide, et sapientia fretus, eorumque, quæ ad academiæ emolumentum faciunt, studiosissimus, id oneris, cui ferendo impar sum, nunquam sustulissem; imo ut statim a suscepto munere, ne diutius fatali huic curarum Caucaso illigarer, non illico summa vi contenderim, quod aliorum imperium ferre coactus sim, non quod ipse imperare vellem, in causa fuit. Sed post multas alias, easque varii generis, cum religiosas, tum civiles, peracta tandem etiam est et hæc vitæ nostræ scena; qua quod non scenæ, sed sub Deo vestris commodis servire animus erat, conscientia, et conscientia infinite major Deus testis est. An decenter, scite, et καλῶς, an spectatoribus tripudia injiciens partes meas egisse videar, perinde curo, ac corum facta, qui nunquam nati sunt. Quæ in Dei Opt. Max. gloriam, patriæ salutem, utilitatem academiæ consului, vel gessi, ei curæ erunt, qui nos miseros homunciones ope sua sublevat, gratia instruit, favore protegit, ut investigabili plane sapientia consilia omnia sua sancta exequatur. Ut autem in demandata provincia tuenda sceleris alicujus me esse conscium etiam atque etiam pernego; ita omnis culpæ me esse expertem, nullaque reprehensione dignum, stultissimus essem, si opinarer. Id vero serio triumpho, quod non capularis senex, aut silicernium, rude sum donatus, et quod minus saltem inter eos, qui ad res seculi et negotia publica spectant, ultimum vitæ actum peregisse videor. Quod annum vitæ agens alterum supra quadragesimum non infimum locum in castris, in curia, in academia tenui, imo summum, qui meæ sortis et conditionis homini in nostra republica contingere potest; quodque in omnibus me ita gessi, ut neque pudeat neque pigeat gessisse, id gratiæ et misericordiæ divinæ in solidum imputandum est. Etenim

> quicquid sum ego, quamvis
> Infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me
> Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
> Invidia.[c]

Dumque communi hac luce frui dabitur, vitæ anteactæ suavissima recordatio non minimum erit angustiarum leva-

[c] Hor. Sat. ii. 1. 74.

men; illis enim placuisse, qui nobis universis et populo placent, aliquam laudem esse duco. Ut itaque per aliquot annorum spatium eorum, qui in patria nostra consiliis et armis facile principes erant, etiam illius viri, quem nos ut maximum, ita consultissimum, et post homines natos fortissimum novimus, consuetudine et commercio uti mihi contigit: ita summa necessitudinis jura cum pluribus in orbe literario dictatoribus, in illustrissima hac academia, inire datum est. Habet autem quodcunque genus hominum, quod admirer; habet etiam, quod merito displiceat: de quo omnia bona dicere possimus, aut qui in omnibus contemni debeat, nemo est. Homines sumus; qui secum, aut partium, quas impensius colit, assertoribus sapientiam et pietatem natas esse, et morituras sentit, ille solus reliquis omnibus postponi meruit.

Jam valete, academici; . . . . . nominum in universitatis matriculam inscriptis; . . . . . ad doctoratum admissis; ad gradum autem magistri . . . . .; baccalaurei . . . . . ; amissis per multos annos professorum stipendiis, recuperatis, solutis; nonnullis muneribus haud contemnendis sublevatis; juribus et privilegiis academiæ contra quosvis malevolorum conatus propugnatis; ærario decuplo aucto; pluribus ex omni ordine in academia ad diversa honorum, et beneficiorum genera promotis; exercitiis novis inductis et stabilitis; veteribus rite peractis; morum reformatione sedulo tentata, profligatis quibusdam rabulis nequicquam ringentibus; laboribus innumeris; sumptibus prodige impensis, cum sæpius morti proximus vestri causa odi hos artus, fragilemque hunc corporis usum mentem deserturum; spretis vulgi convitiis, et superata aliorum invidia; vos plurimum salvere et valere jubeo. Mihi gratulor successorem, qui me hoc onere expedire possit; vobis talem, qui quicquid in rem vestram peccavit nostra incuria, in integrum restituere potis est.

Tibi autem, vir doctissime, honorem neque proprio labore, nec votis adeptum, adeptum tamen, una cum universa hac eruditorum cavea gratulor. Quemcunque velis antecessorem animo revolve, unius virtutem, alterius eruditionem, tertii gratiam, meum, qui nihil amplius sum, quinquennium tibi ex animo precor. Macte virtute tua, vir ornatissime, sub auspiciis tuis floreat academia, cumque sis egregius aliis artibus, ne sis mollis ægritudinem aut invidiam pati, cætera

omnia levia erunt. Dura autem est conditio spectatæ virtutis, magna inde expectantur; vix ab ea grata sunt, quibus stuporem injicerent incognita. Præstantissima etiam aromata fœdare contendunt muscæ et vespæ. Nemo unquam fuit virtute et eruditione insignis, quem non statim exceperit invidia. Sed quo me duceret orationis filum nescius, hic incidendum curavi. Ego antiquos labores, notas vigilias, omissa studia repeto: vos, academici, vivite, et valete.

ORATIO VI.[a]

AD V. A. RICHARDUM CROMWELLUM.

Minora illa sceptra, Vir Amplissime, quæ manibus, quibus ipsam pæne librat Europam, portasse magnus parens vester non erubuit, insurgentis gloriæ et decoris non contemnenda omina, ad pedes tuos provolvit academia Oxoniensis. Si tibi ingentiori spiritu se gerere, quam pro conditione, si fastu quodam intumescere videbitur gens togata, quod non minoris patroni in clientela et fide esse voluerit; id nimio ejus favori, qui amplexu suo eam tanquam sortis immemorem ad amplissima quæque aspirare jussit, imputandum est. Ejus vero jam in laudes spatiari, aut recensere beneficia, cum omnes optima omnia ei accepta ferre gestiunt, atque ipse factorum gloria immortali sit consecratus, haud opus est. Viri itaque omnium, quos extulit seculum hocce heroum ferax, prudentissimi et fortissimi elogia consulto prætereo. Quocunque tandem vergat res Anglicana, ibit in seculum, fuisse principem, cui cordi fuerunt et insulæ gloria, et religionis honos. Postquam autem vir ille maximus ad solium pæne evexerat musas, atque ipsas tantum non regnantes coluit orbis Britannicus; cum unius tantum dominationis patiens respublica, literarium et Platonicum imperium ferre nequiverit, ut proxima tamen esset in conditione, atque non nisi sub spe imperii, aut saltem merito serviret, laudabili et tuta ambitione laborare, suavissima pristini honoris recordatio coegit academiam.

[a] Cum hæc oratio inter auctoris schedulas sua manu exarata inveniretur, superioribus hic adjungere visum est. De tempore autem et occasione illius supra diximus, in Orationum inscriptione.

Habes ideo, Vir Ampliss. per innumera rerum discrimina, multo labore, multis studiis, vigiliis, precibus, hucusque conservatam pietatis, literarum, modestiæ, temperantiæ causam, qua nihil melius, neque amplius est in natura mortalium, tutelam obnixe ambientem, salutare orantem patrocinium; illam ut suscipias, amplectaris, foveas cura atque indulgentia illius tantum cogitationibus minoribus et secundis, a quo es secundus, bonorum ubivis omnium et votum est, et expectatio. Κειμήλιον vero hoc, atque ingens antiquæ pietatis et munificentiæ depositum, quamvis tibi, viro in amplissimo dignitatis fastigio posito, honori esse non posse videatur; ne pudori sit aut vituperio, et propitius quem hactenus in Christo numinis favor nactus est, et doctioris orbis cultus et reverentia effecerunt. Quæ vero et quanta ab hominibus, ira, odio, studio partium incitatis, per annos aliquot jam proxime elapsos passa sit academia; quibus rerum anfractibus involuta, periculis exposita, hucusque succreverit; qua contentione et studio causa pietatis, religionis, et severioris disciplinæ cum iis congressa, qui nihil otiosa vita, et plena, et conferta voluptatibus præstabilius esse ducunt, firmata sit; quidque ei ope omni mortali grandius in subsidium et fulcimentum venisse constet, silere mallem; quam molestæ querimoniæ suspicionem apud quemvis mortalium subire. Ex diuturna perturbatione, per te forsan, Vir Ampl. lucem et portum intuebitur academia. Habet vices hasce conditio mortalium, ex adversis secunda, ex secundis adversa nascuntur.

Floreant ideo sub tuis auspiciis cum ipsa academia, tum quæque in ea patrocinio tuo, bonorumve laude digna sunt. Floreat doctissima atque optimæ spei numerosa juventus, germana matris academiæ proles, insurgentis seculi quoquo vergat pars nobilis futura. Floreat pietas, ingenuus candor, et justitiæ soror incorrupta fides, morum integritas, atque omnia recta tentandi audax industria et prudentia. Hisce salvis, ibimus, ibimus lubentissime, quo fata academiæ et omni casu benignior divina providentia nos vocent.

END OF VOL. XXI.

Printed by J. F. Dove, St. John's Square.